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VOLUME 1



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Encyclopedia of Modern Political Thought

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Introduction

Throughout human history, most people have lived on the land, engaged in shepherding or farming and in a state of servitude, if not outright slavery. A series of transformations in the early modern period, particularly the growth of towns and of commerce, began to alter this historic pattern of despotic power and aristocratic domination. Political modernity largely commenced with the revolt in 1776 of the British colonists of North America, which became known as the American Revolution; and the rebellion of Louis XVI of France's subjects in 1789, which we today term the French Revolution. These very disparate events occurred in quite different circumstances and produced markedly distinct outcomes. The third great political event in this sequence, the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, took place in turn against the background of world war and the maturing of a new revolutionary ideology, communism, and it self-consciously created yet another alternative path to modernization.

Modernity in the wider sense also encompasses two other forms of revolution. The first is the emergence of what came to be called "commercial society" in the eighteenth century, in which nations began increasingly to form an international division of labor and to trade with one another in a world market, a process we loosely term *globalization* today. The second is the industrial revolution, which, with scientific and technological innovation, dramatically increased the rate of production of goods, utterly transformed the world's system of communications, concentrated and intensified the work routines of many millions, and ultimately, with improvements in agricultural techniques, provided the nutritional, medical, and other means of sustaining and improving the quality of life for ever-increasing numbers of people. Initially, the transfer of these techniques from their origins in the more developed nations often took place through imperial conquest and colonial settlement. Here, following the Napoleonic wars, Britain dominated the world in the nineteenth century, and the great early modern empires of Spain and Portugal were largely displaced and supplanted by those of France, Belgium, Holland, Italy, Germany, Russia, the United States, and Japan.

Following World War II, many of these empires were dissolved, often by violence, though financial relationships of dependency remain in many parts of the world. The United States and (until 1991) the USSR then increasingly emerged as superpowers in world politics and performed the roles of the leading nineteenth-century empires in this period, with China joining them in the early twenty-first century.

These processes generated many of the key themes that form our starting-point in this encyclopedia—loosely the mid-eighteenth century, with the inheritance of Locke and the principles of Rousseau, particularly respecting ideas of the social contract and the necessity of government to recognise rights, rather than the earlier seventeenth century and the dominant figures of the early modern period, Thomas Hobbes and Niccolò Machiavelli, both of whom have some claims as founders of modern political thought. The British model of constitutional monarchy was hammered out from the “Glorious Revolution” of 1688 onward, to be succeeded in global influence by the American model through the late nineteenth century onward. Both forms became more democratic throughout this period, in that they extended the franchise and popular political participation, which came to include women and hitherto excluded minorities. Both became wedded to the principles we today loosely term *liberalism*, giving economic preference to free market competition and organizing politics around a multiparty system and, increasingly, public opinion. In both, the principle of divine right monarchy gave way to the natural, then human, rights of citizens, and with it to a dramatic new form of obligation of the state and society to the individual, where privileges accorded to rank were trumped by universal and equal rights, and where power flowed legitimately only from the bottom upward, not the top downward. And along the road, a new conception of a rights-based, increasingly individuated self began to emerge and to mutate.

With urbanization and improved education, a sense of the achievements of the political revolutions of the eighteenth century (and then too of their failings) came to spread with increasing speed across the globe. What Americans and some Europeans came to claim by way of rights—freedom of trade and the abolition of despotisms, slavery, and feudal privileges—became desired in other parts of the world. Yet as early as 1848, it was

evident that the tensions between political and economic modernity might provoke substantial conflict. This can be understood as the clash of two different ideals of liberty. On the banner of republican and democratic movements were the slogans of liberty, equal rights, and popular sovereignty. Rights claims are essentially here claims to equal liberties. Yet the massively increasing wealth of the property- and machine-owning few to some appeared to impose a new form of domination and exploitation no better than and in some respects worse than feudalism. Liberty of property appeared to clash with that desire by the majority for freedom of individual self-fulfillment and a decent standard of life, or freedom from want. The latter desires represent a very different account of liberty. A dominant strand of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century thought, Social Darwinism, seemingly justified abandoning the “less fit” to their fate. But the spectacle of poverty in the midst of plenty presented a perplexing paradox by the late nineteenth century, and opposition to the concentration of wealth unmitigated by sympathy for the poor grew steadily. Welfare mechanisms began to be put in place, occasionally, as in Germany under Bismarck, to hinder socialist electoral gains, elsewhere more as a compromise between collectivist and non-interventionist groups. The twentieth century would then be dominated by the titanic struggle between the two great ideologies of modernity, liberal capitalism and (mostly Marxian) socialism, and the emergence of a multiplicity of variants within each. In response, in particular, to the Great Depression of the 1930s, capitalism proved able to adapt to the severe social strains of increasing poverty and unemployment. History failed to deliver what Marx’s prophecy of proletarian emancipation had predicted. The catastrophe of both fascist and communist totalitarianism marks a watershed in the history of dictatorial brutality and of the uglier forms of nationalism. Mindful of Marx’s own early commitment to individual freedom from oppression and alienation as well as working-class emancipation, critical and humanist schools of Marxism would scrutinise the ashes of these disasters. But no phoenix arose from them. Despite the failure of Soviet communism in the 1990s, however, in the early twenty-first century, we witness the astonishing achievements of a nation, China, in which capitalism and communism seem as nearly reconciled as may be possible, though (as one of our entries tells us) the word *modern* entered the Chinese lexicon only in 1920.

Seen from this viewpoint, then, the chief political movements and central political ideals of modernity have revolved around a revolt against privilege and servitude, against grasping landlords, knavish priests, and hereditary autocratic princes, and in favor of meritocracy and greater individual freedom. They have also often assumed the form of demands for greater liberty for communities submerged within larger and often hostile states as well as their further immersion in modern nation-states and empires. These movements have often brought with them a generalized subversion of almost every form of traditional authority, from parent to church to king to god, in the pursuit of individual autonomy. So, too, they have often provoked a fierce reaction and defense of the old order, its gods and its ways. The great modern campaigns to create and extend rights, to found responsive and responsible democratically elected governments, and then to seek beyond these social justice, all emanate from the same substantive drive toward equality that defines modernity above all else from a social viewpoint. Both the great ideologies of this period, liberalism and socialism, thus share to some degree a common source. Yet these ideals are in constant tension throughout the development of the modern period and to the present day. Monarchs have tumbled, and feudal landlords have been expropriated. But corporate CEOs have often taken their places, the concentration of wealth at times trumping democratic control over public affairs, at times falling victim to it, the omnipresent modern state sometimes serving to assist its citizens, sometimes reasserting a hegemonic mastery over them, sometimes itself a mere puppet in the hands of powerful and often corrupt financial interests.

This encyclopedia, then, introduces the key phenomena, concepts, and processes that these developments have produced, and offers a basic point of departure for students of political thought, political theory, political philosophy, and ideology. These disciplinary variants offer, of course, different starting points for entry into their subjects, different trajectories of enquiry, and different problems to solve. It is hoped that the present work, however, offers something of use to each, and the prospect of acquiring something useful in turn from the approaches of others.

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Gregory Claeys

May 2013

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Gregory Claeys Gregory Claeys

Abortion and Political Thought

Abortion and political thought

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Abortion and Political Thought

Political and moral questions concerning abortion focus on induced abortions—the intentional termination of pregnancy—as distinguished from spontaneous abortions or miscarriages. Induced abortions may be for medical reasons (therapeutic abortions) or other reasons (elective abortions). The abortion issue is highly controversial, often involving public demonstrations supporting the right to abortion and public protests against the practice, protests sometimes escalating to violence against property and persons.

In the United Kingdom, the Abortion Act of 1967, an act of Parliament governing England, Wales, and Scotland, legalized abortion performed by trained persons on women up to their twenty-eighth week of pregnancy. In 1990, that law was amended to permit abortions only up to twenty-four weeks except in situations involving the health of the woman or the status of the fetus. In the United States, the 1973 Supreme Court decision *Roe v. Wade*, one of the most controversial decisions of the court, declared unconstitutional any state law prohibiting abortion during the first trimester of pregnancy. *Roe* permitted states to regulate abortions during the second trimester and allowed states to prohibit abortions during the third trimester except in cases where the woman's health was jeopardized or the normalcy of the fetus was an issue. *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, a 1992 Supreme Court decision, replaced the trimester formula of *Roe* with the notion of fetal viability placed at twenty-two or twenty-three weeks. States are permitted to ban abortion after that point except in cases where abortion is

necessary to preserve the life or health of the mother. Throughout Europe and Asia, a wide variety of laws are in place, most of which legalize abortion under certain circumstances.

The moral debate over abortion is often mistakenly described as a conflict between those who oppose abortion and those who support it. The politically charged labels *pro-life* and *pro-choice* are frequently used to designate the two positions. In fact, few oppose abortion under every circumstance, and few support abortion under any circumstance. There is a continuum between the extremes of always opposing abortion and always supporting abortion, and most individuals fall somewhere between the extremes.

Typically, the most conservative moral position sees abortion as justifiable only when the woman's life is at stake, as in an ectopic pregnancy. These pregnancies usually occur in the fallopian tubes and may cause the death of the mother and fetus if not terminated. Conservatives who normally see abortion as "murder" can justify ending an ectopic pregnancy as an instance of self-defense. A less conservative position sees abortion as justified also in cases of rape or incest. This position stems in part from seeing pregnancy as a natural consequence of the choice of sexual activity—the woman (and man) should be responsible for their choices—whereas in rape and incest, the woman did not choose to engage in reproductive activity. A more liberal position considers the mental health of the woman as sometimes providing justification for abortion; some argue that preventing suicide on the part of the woman is an extension of the self-defense analogy used in the case of ectopic pregnancies. Even more liberal positions see abortion as essentially belated contraception, meaning that any reason that a woman might have for avoiding pregnancy applies: the woman's age, financial situation, life plans, unmarried state, or simply the desire not to have children. The more reasons a person accepts as justifying abortion, the more liberal his or her place on this continuum.

The pro-choice position emphasizes a woman's right to choose what occurs in her own body whenever possible. In the United States, this moral position is often seen as legally buttressed by the right to privacy, the roots of which are found in amendments to the U.S. Constitution, particularly the

Fourteenth Amendment. While pro-choice proponents may personally oppose abortion in certain circumstances, they generally accept its legality and leave the determination of particular cases to individuals. The pro-life position is typically (though not always) grounded in religious commitments, but is cast politically in terms of the rights of a human being from the moment of conception. No doubt the fetus is living and human, but is the fetus a person with rights? Or is the fetus properly characterized as only a potential person; if so, does the fetus have the same rights as the pregnant woman who is fully a person? These issues are the heart of the moral debate, although additional matters are involved. What rights, if any for example, does the biological father of the fetus have? What rights do parents of minor children have to be notified of their child's intent to have an abortion? The debate is connected to debates about feminism, sexual activity, disability, the role of religion in politics, and the role of the modern state in regulating or adjudicating moral issues.

John Noonan and Don Marquis have written frequently cited essays opposing abortion. Widely referenced essays defending the morality of abortion have been written by Judith Jarvis Thomson and Mary Anne Warren. Organizations such as the Catholic Church, Operation Rescue, Catholics for Choice, and the Alan Guttmacher Institute are sources of reading material from opposing perspectives.

Robert Baird

See also [Feminism](#); [Libertarianism](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#)

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Kevin E. Schmiesing Kevin E. Schmiesing

Acton, John (Lord Acton)

Acton, John (Lord Acton)

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Acton, John (Lord Acton)

John Emerich Edward Dalberg Acton was a British peer, historian, and correspondent. Although his direct involvement in politics was limited and he published no single, major work in any field, he was a noted historian of political thought, a major figure in European liberal Catholicism, and an influential player in the liberal movement in British politics.

Life

Acton was born in Naples, Italy, January 10, 1834, to Sir Ferdinand Richard Acton and Marie, the daughter of the Duke of Dalberg, Germany. Acton's life reflected this cosmopolitan and aristocratic background: he traveled widely, conversed fluently in the major European languages, and resided for long periods in England, Germany, and Italy alike. At age three, Acton's widowed mother remarried; his stepfather, George Leveson-Gower, would be Lord Granville, foreign minister of the Empire and political ally of William Gladstone.

Acton's great-grandfather had converted to Roman Catholicism in the eighteenth century, and the Acton line retained that religious allegiance. Thus, the boy attended Catholic boarding school in England (St. Mary's, Oscott) and developed a strong commitment to the faith of his birth parents. Religion played a vital role in his thought and in the course of his life. His application to Cambridge University was declined on account of his

Catholicism, and he went to Munich to study under the respected priest-historian Ignaz von Döllinger.

In 1854, he returned to England to accept his inheritance of the family estate at Aldenham and five years later was elected to Parliament to represent the Irish district of Carlow. In 1865, he married the daughter of Italian nobility, Marie Arco. With her, he had six children, four of them surviving to adulthood.

Acton was a passive member of Parliament, rarely speaking in debates and frequently missing votes, and his stay in electoral politics was brief. He was defeated in a bid to represent Bridgnorth, England, in 1868, and he turned his attention to writing and editing. Yet his involvement in politics introduced him to a collaborator of significant influence: future Prime Minister William Gladstone. Back in his element as an intellectual provocateur, he masterminded the production of the short-lived but influential journal of political and religious commentary, the *Rambler* (later *Home and Foreign Review*).

Acton's interest in the intersection of religion and politics led to his deep involvement, behind the scenes, in the First Vatican Council (1869–70), where he organized the ultimately unsuccessful Episcopal opposition to the declaration of papal infallibility. This action, combined with his political and personal differences with the leading British bishop of the time, Edward Cardinal Manning, led to a spirited controversy in the English Catholic world over Acton's theological orthodoxy. Acton remained a committed Catholic for the rest of his life, though he continued to criticize official policy on issues that he deemed open to debate, such as the Roman Question. (Acton opposed the pope's claim to secular authority over the Papal States, authority that had been forcibly divested in 1870 in the course of Italian unification.)

By this point, Acton was a well-known figure in European political and intellectual life. He participated in the establishment of the *English Historical Review* in 1885, and his articles published there solidified his position as one of the leading lights of the historical profession. William Gladstone had recommended him for a peerage in 1869, and Lord Acton remained Gladstone's confidant and a proponent of Liberal politics

throughout the latter's terms as prime minister. Although he never obtained a diplomatic or cabinet post as he desired, Acton was in 1892 appointed a lord-in-waiting to Queen Victoria. He relinquished that position three years later when he was nominated for the Regius Chair in Modern History at Cambridge University—a fitting personal triumph in light of his earlier exclusion—where he served as the first editor of the monumental *Cambridge Modern History*. He died June 19th, 1902, at Tegernsee, Bavaria.

Religious and Historical Views

Acton's primary intellectual concern was charting and promoting the extension of freedom in human history. While he wrote a number of quotable aphorisms concerning freedom, a precise definition of his view remains elusive. It is clear that freedom for Acton contained both negative and positive senses: the absence of constraints, but also the direction toward a good. In 1877 in "The History of Freedom in Antiquity," an address to the members of the Bridgnorth Institute, Acton stated, liberty is "the assurance that every man shall be protected in doing what he believes is his duty against the influence of authority and majorities, custom and opinion" (quoted in Fears 1988, 7); yet in 1860, Acton wrote in "The Roman Question," published in the *Rambler*, "Liberty [is] not the power of doing what we like, but the right of being able to do what we ought" (quoted in Fears 1988, 613).

As these definitions suggest, the security of the individual conscience lay at the heart of Acton's concept of freedom. "Liberty of conscience is the first of liberties," Acton insisted in the Acton Papers (quoted in Fears 1988, 504). Institutions promoted freedom by removing rather than erecting obstacles to conscientious action. Liberty, he suggested in one of his aphorisms found in the Acton Papers, is "the reign of conscience" (quoted in Fears 1988, 491).

In his lectures, "The History of Freedom in Antiquity" and "The History of Freedom in Christianity," Acton depicted history as the gradual unfolding of liberty in the face of power. Liberty was not the natural state of affairs, but had been achieved to a greater or lesser degree in various times and

places over the course of history. Acton believed that progress—the advance of liberty—could be identified, but it did not occur in a simple chronological line: “Progress is along diagonals,” as he once put it (Dalberg-Acton 1907, 489).

His admiration for the Catholic Church was in part due to his observation that the church had played a definitive role in Western history by undermining the absolute power of the state. Christianity’s rise had the dual effect of creating an institution that could counterbalance the despotic tendencies of the state and promoting a concept of the person as a holder of the rights of conscience superior to any government edict.

Yet Acton’s enthusiasm for liberty and distaste for power led him to oppose the centralization of power wherever he perceived it, including in ecclesiastical circles. Thus, the temporal power gradually acquired by the church after the time of fourth-century Roman Emperor Constantine was problematic. His fear of power as well as his reading of papal history inspired him to lead the opposition to the definition of papal infallibility at the First Vatican Council. His criticism of the abuses of power by churchmen also gave rise to his most famous saying, a correspondence between Acton and Mandell Creighton in 1887, “Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely” (quoted in Fears 1988, 383).

Identifying abuses of power and discovering the conditions conducive to liberty were the formidable and important tasks of the historian. The historian’s duty, as Acton saw it, was not merely to uncover and present the facts of the past, though accuracy and honesty were essential traits. The utility of historians lay in their weighing the goodness of historical actors by applying strict standards of moral conduct. Great figures of history who used their positions to accumulate power and to exercise sway over the lives of others stood condemned at Acton’s tribunal. This explains why Acton was most severe in his judgments concerning figures such as kings, emperors, and popes: The more capacity one possessed for abusing power, the more damage one could cause. “Great men are almost always bad men,” Acton asserted to Creighton in 1887 (quoted in Fears 1988, 383).

Acton, therefore, had little patience with the historian who found mitigating factors that might excuse or even elicit sympathy for the perpetrator of

morally dubious acts: he called such a scholar the “weaker man with the sponge” who followed the “strong man with the dagger,” cleansing the reputations of history’s villains (Dalberg-Acton 2000, 80).

Yet in this as in other matters, Acton’s thought underwent development. In his early writings, Acton found reasons to explain Catholic persecution of Protestants, to justify the temporal power of the papacy, and to permit the gradual rather than immediate emancipation of slaves in the American South. On each of these issues, Acton later regretted his lack of clarity: what was evil was so always and everywhere and merited condemnation.

Increasingly unbending in both his moral stance and his tone, he alienated erstwhile collaborators such as the celebrated Catholic convert and priest John Henry Newman and his own mentor, Döllinger. Newman came to accept the doctrine of infallibility, which appeared to Acton to be an act of intellectual dishonesty. Döllinger withheld condemnation of historical actors for apparent crimes when he perceived extenuating circumstances. Both sins were unforgivable by the standards of Acton’s moral code.

Political Thought

Acton’s political outlook was a function of his religious views and historical perspective. The freedom to do one’s duty was rooted in and fulfilled by self-government in political and religious spheres. This philosophy was implicit in both Christianity and the British Constitution, and hence, the two were complementary. Because the purpose of politics was freedom—to preserve space for the exercise of conscience—religious liberty and civil liberty were inextricably connected.

Acton reserved some of his strongest criticism for those who denied religious freedom. “He that deems he can advocate the cause of religion,” he wrote in “The Count de Montalembert” in 1858, “without advocating at the same time the cause of freedom, is no better than a hypocrite and a traitor” (quoted in Fears 1988, 10). The development of religious liberty was therefore one of the great advances of civilization, and Acton gave John Locke due credit for his advocacy of toleration.

Whatever impinged on conscience was to be resisted. Thus, religious persecution was intolerable, but so were ignorance, poverty, war, and immorality. Addressing these various threats meant taking a view of government power that was not unequivocally negative. Acton favored compulsory schooling and measures to alleviate extreme inequalities in wealth. He observed that the wartime state always curtailed individual freedoms, while moral turpitude was a suppression rather than an expression of conscience.

As his concern about inequality suggests, Acton did not ignore freedom's economic dimension, and he frequently cited approvingly the work of German historical economist Wilhelm Roscher. Private property was for Acton of vital importance as a bulwark against the tendency of state dominance. Slavery, however, could not be defended, as it violated the freedom of the owned and corrupted the owner. Acton advocated both poor relief and free trade for the same reason: they enabled prosperity, which in turn encouraged liberty.

Religion, as seen above, was a vital factor in creating the context for freedom. Christianity put forward ideas vital to the advance of freedom: protection of conscience, the church-state distinction, self-government, and alleviation of poverty. Yet in Acton's sophisticated interpretation, the church was not always the vehicle for the delivery of these ideas to realization in history. They "became efficacious and masterful," he wrote in "The Puritan Revolution" in 1906, "by denying their origin" (quoted in Fears 1988, 97). Implemented under secular auspices through the political events of British, American, and French revolutions, these principles were derived first, in Acton's estimation, from religious rather than political sources.

Religion's role, however, was not merely historical. Christianity's ongoing importance lay in forming moral citizens capable of appreciating and maintaining liberty, "the delicate fruit of a mature civilization," Acton stated in his 1877 "The History of Freedom in Antiquity" (quoted in Fears 1988, 5). At the same time, the direct connection of religious and state power was a formula for tyranny of the worst sort. Acton eschewed both pagan and theocratic approaches to the relation of religion and politics.

As Acton saw it, the development of freedom in England was in his own time furthered by the liberal movement, and he therefore advocated the Liberal Party's politics in his activity and writings. At first wary of William Gladstone and doubtful of his sincerity, Acton became a devoted friend and ally, admiring him as a principled champion of liberty for such stances as his support of Irish Home Rule and for his willingness to inject moral concerns into political life. Wrapping the very prospect of humanity's progress in the fortunes of the liberal movement, Acton invested politics with heavy moral significance. He seemed to sense that he took politics too seriously: "Politics comes nearer religion with me," Acton wrote to Mary Gladstone in 1884, "a party is more like a church" (quoted in Hill 2000, 170).

Acton's liberalism put him in a position at once appreciative and critical toward the chief figure in British conservatism, Edmund Burke. He praised Burke's defense of conscience and property, but deemed his attachment to tradition to be dangerously conservative. He thought Burke's deference to custom and circumstance compromised the moral principles that were a surer guide to judgment in history and politics.

Given his focus on the threat of power, Acton was naturally inclined toward governmental systems that contained checks and balances. He viewed the British model of constitutional monarchy as deserving the highest praise, though he eventually came to admire equally American republicanism. Initially skeptical of the governmental system of the United States, he feared that it placed too much faith in the people, raising inadequate safeguards in the form of constitutional limits. Democracy presented as many problems as monarchy, he thought: the majority might easily be persuaded by fleeting concerns to approve measures restrictive of freedom.

Yet Acton came to regard the American system as a work of genius, federalism being the key to its success. The federal arrangement diminished the threat of popular tyranny by diffusing power among the states. Federalism, he believed, was "the one immortal tribute of America to political science," at once the "consummation and the guard of democracy" (Dalberg-Acton 2000, 31).

For some fifty years after his death, Acton remained relatively obscure, a fact attributable to reasons of intellectual and political climate as well as the paucity of easily accessible materials. (Acton's considerable intellectual legacy was contained in large measure in published essays scattered in defunct journals and in correspondence rather than in published monographs.) In the post–World War II era, Acton's stature steadily grew as increasing attention was paid to the themes on which Acton concentrated: the dangers of state power and the relation between morality and politics. Admirers focused on the Cambridge professor's apparently prescient criticism of the ideologies of the twentieth century. Acton looked dimly upon the increasingly popular notion of nationality, for example, scoring it in "Nationality," published in 1862 in *The Home and Foreign Review*, as a "retrograde step in history" (quoted in Fears 1988, 432).

Acton's rehabilitation was facilitated by the ongoing collection, editing, and releasing of his essays, notes, and correspondence. By the late twentieth century, he was recognized by some as a major figure in the pantheon of liberal thinkers that included Locke, John Stuart Mill, and Thomas Hobbes. The major piece lacking in Acton scholarship—an oft-called-for full-length biography—finally appeared in 2000.

Given his emphasis on the corrupting effect of power, libertarians have naturally invoked Acton as an ally in contemporary debates, and proponents of limited government have most consistently and enthusiastically promoted his thought. Yet his religious views, his explicit critique of laissez-faire economics, and his recognition of the state's role in supporting morality, education, and economic equality has rendered his legacy too complex and his intellectual appeal too diverse to be appropriated by a single political constituency.

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See also [Authority](#); [Federalism](#); [Liberalism](#); [Mill, John Stuart](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#)

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Adams, John

Adams, John

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Adams, John

In the late eighteenth century, John Adams (1735–1826) participated in the colonial American struggle against British imperial authority, the movement for American independence, and the establishment of republican government in the United States. His political thought and leadership played a crucial role in transforming thirteen of Britain's mainland North American colonies into a republic. Historians typically recognize two phases in the development of Adams's thought. First, during the period of resistance to Great Britain, Adams's major writings on liberty such as *A Dissertation on the Canon and the Feudal Law* (1765) and *Novanglus* (1775) gained for him a reputation as a defender of colonial rights. Second, by the 1780s, Adams shifted his attention away from abstract questions about liberty toward a consideration of good governance in his *Thoughts on Government* (1776), *A Defence of the Constitutions*, and *Discourses on Davila* (1790). For Adams, the critical problem that emerged from the American Revolution concerned finding the proper balance between preserving the people's liberty and securing the social and political order.

A descendent of the Puritans, Adams was born on his family's farm in Braintree, Massachusetts, in 1735. His family possessed neither wealth nor social standing. Despite the lack of family connections, Adams attended Harvard College. His father, who wanted Adams to enter the ministry, sold a portion of farmland to provide for his son's education. At Harvard, Adams's learning took a secular turn. He became more interested in natural philosophy through reading the works of John Locke, Francis Bacon, and

Isaac Newton than in the theological controversies with which New England ministers traditionally occupied themselves. In 1756, within one year of his graduation, Adams began his legal studies. Under the guidance of Judge James Putnam of Worcester, Massachusetts, Adams undertook an extensive reading program of both classical and modern law books to prepare for the profession; he invariably brought this education in law and constitutionalism to bear on his subsequent political thought.

As Adams began to build his legal practice in the mid-1760s, Great Britain launched a series of administrative reforms aimed at making its empire more profitable and efficient. These reforms entailed new regulations and taxes on the colonists. After Parliament passed the Stamp Act, which placed a tax on all printed materials and legal documents in the colonies, widespread denunciations of the tax emerged. This imperial crisis pushed Adams to think more deeply about the foundation of liberty in New England. In 1765, he published *A Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law*. That work stressed the unconstitutionality of Britain's attempt to tax the colonies without their representation in Parliament. To Adams, the Stamp Act, combined with Britain's attempt to establish Anglicanism and episcopacy in New England, represented a conspiracy to enslave the colonies.

Published as a series of articles in *The Boston Gazette*, Adams's *Dissertation* depicted the Anglo-American past as a struggle between liberty and tyranny. Drawing on the anti-Catholicism that animated colonial New England, he asserted that the worst tyranny in history had been "the wicked confederacy" between the canon and feudal law invented by Roman Catholic priests for the enlargement of their own powers. However, since the Protestant Reformation, the English people had become determined to secure their rights. In seventeenth-century England, the Stuart dynasty attempted to resurrect that confederacy between religious and political authority, but these attempts gave rise to a Puritan opposition. According to this interpretation, the Puritans had founded New England as a refuge from civil and ecclesiastical tyranny. In opposing Parliament's unconstitutional taxes, Adams asserted that the colonists must revive the spirit of resistance displayed by their Puritan ancestors. Although Adams largely rejected the

theological underpinnings of Calvinism, Puritan precedents continued to guide his understanding of liberty.

After serving in the Massachusetts House of Representatives, defending the British soldiers accused of murdering civilians during the Boston Massacre, and participating in the First Continental Congress, Adams published his next major work, *Novanglus: Or, A History of the Dispute with America from Its Origin, in 1754, to the Present Time*. Published during another imperial crisis, these essays appeared as a series in *The Boston Gazette* in early 1775. One year previously, Parliament had passed the Coercive Acts, which closed Boston's port, appointed a military governor for Massachusetts, and suspended that colony's assembly. These measures aimed to stamp out the resistance movement in Boston and to cut off New England from the rest of the colonies. *Novanglus* used both natural law and historical precedents to deny Parliament's authority over the colonies. In effect, Adams's revolutionary argument denied the Whig theory of Parliamentary supremacy that had dominated British political thought after the Glorious Revolution (1688–89). Instead, he argued that the provincial assemblies governed the colonies and that their authority derived from a grant by the king.

In *Novanglus*, Adams further denounced the “dark intrigues and wicked machinations” of the “Tory” supporters of Parliament who sought to expand the powers of the imperial government at the expense of the colonists' liberties. Specifically, he attacked the junto of Thomas Hutchinson, Andrew Oliver, and Francis Bernard. These colonial officials, Adams believed, monopolized public offices in the colonies. Through multiple appointments, these men dangerously blurred the executive, legislative, and judicial powers. This violation of the principle of separation of powers posed a threat to colonial liberties. Adams appealed to “revolution principles,” which he defined as “the principles of Aristotle and Plato, of Livy and Cicero, and Sidney, Harrington, and Locke,” as the foundation of government. These revolution principles, he argued, ultimately justified resistance to tyranny. Still, maintaining his allegiance to the monarchy, Adams in *Novanglus* confined his criticism of British authority to Parliament and colonial officials.

As imperial government began to collapse in America (1775–76), John Adams encouraged the states to replace their colonial governments with new republican constitutions. He collected his advice on the formation of republican constitutions in *Thoughts on Government: Applicable to the Present State of the American Colonies*. Published in 1776, this pamphlet represented Adams's strongest statement of political principles as well as his most influential work to date. In this work, Adams offers one of his early statements of his devotion to mixed government. Adams believed that a mixed constitution or balanced government, modeled on that of Great Britain, secured liberty and order. By dividing power among the King, Lords, and Commons, the British constitution distributed power respectively among the three Aristotelian orders: the one (monarchy), the few (aristocracy), and the many (democracy). If any one of these three political bodies acquired too much power, a constitution grew corrupt. Building on this British model, Adams believed that powers should be distributed in a republic between the few (an aristocracy based not on birth but on merit) and the many (a virtuous citizenry). Adams developed this theme at greater length in the 1780s.

In 1780, Adams put his thoughts on republican government into practice when he drafted the Massachusetts state constitution. Unlike other state constitutions that had deviated from the British model, the Massachusetts constitution reflected Adams's belief in balanced government by establishing a bicameral legislature, an independent judiciary, and a strong executive with a veto power over legislation. This constitution subsequently became the model for other state constitutions as well as for the Federal Constitution. During the Constitutional Convention (1787), Adams remained in Europe on a diplomatic mission. Although he did not participate in that convention, he influenced its proceedings because many delegates used Adams's *Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America* as a reference work during their deliberations.

Published in January 1787, Adams's *Defence* responded to Europeans who argued that several American state constitutions, such as those of Massachusetts, Maryland, and New York, slavishly followed the British model of mixed government. These critics contended that all power must reside in the democratic order, an undivided popular assembly or a

unicameral legislature. Therefore, in his *Defence*, Adams sought to explain the ideas and values that produced the American constitutions. In three volumes, Adams surveyed the history of republics, both ancient and modern, to demonstrate the right thinking of the Americans in establishing mixed constitutions. To do so, Adams quoted—often in large block passages—from a diverse range of authoritative texts that included Niccolò Machiavelli, James Harrington, Algernon Sidney, Charles Baron de Montesquieu, Plato, John Milton, and David Hume. Through its deep learning, the *Defence* became Adams’s masterwork of political thought. In *Discourses on Davila*, published as a series in the *Gazette of the United States* in 1790–91, Adams continued the line of inquiry that he had begun in the *Defence*. He particularly addressed the challenge that the French Revolution posed to American constitutionalism, warning Americans against the democratic excesses of the French Revolution that placed too much power in the hands of the many. At the same time, Adams feared elite dominance in America. For Adams, a mixed constitution was the only way to balance the interests of the few against those of the many.

Through the imperial and constitutional debates of the late eighteenth century, Adams honed his political, legal, and constitutional thought by writing numerous newspaper articles, pamphlets, and books. These works reveal his devotion to certain fundamental principles of good government: the separation of powers, bicameral legislatures, independent executives, and an independent judiciary. Above all, he valued a mixed constitution as the strongest guard against corruption. His political thought also demonstrated a practical bent. Adams formulated his ideas in response to specific crises and problems that Americans faced during that age of revolution and constitution making. Ultimately, Adams’s writings on freedom and governance place him alongside Thomas Jefferson and James Madison as one of the foremost political thinkers of the revolutionary generation.

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See also [American Political Thought](#); [Constitutionalism](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Alton Hornsby Jr. Alton Hornsby Jr.

Affirmative Action

Affirmative action

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Affirmative Action

Affirmative action denotes policies and practices that promote the rise of ethnic, gender, or racial groups in an effort to enhance equal opportunity in areas of life such as education and employment. It seeks to compensate for past discriminations and to urge or require positive actions to increase diversity in colleges and universities, the workplace, and elsewhere.

Although the concept has probably been applied most widely and has become most controversial in the United States of America, it also exists in other nations.

Origins of Affirmative Action in the United States

In the United States, the modern origin of affirmative action is traced to an executive order by President John F. Kennedy in 1961. However, the most explicit use of the term and its most forceful enforcement were begun by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1965. Following the signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, Johnson delivered a major speech on June 4, 1965, in which he gave his definition of affirmative action. He said that the struggle for civil rights had entered its “next and profound stage” and that “we seek . . . not just equality as a right and a theory, but equality as a fact and as a result.” He noted that despite the advances of the Civil Rights Movement, African Americans, especially, still suffered from the vestiges of past and continuing racial discrimination and thus were still crippled in their quest for equality. Therefore, it was

necessary to give them a helping hand or a leg up so as to ensure equal opportunities in education, employment, and other walks of life. Yet to avoid charges of favoritism, Johnson said affirmative action programs would be temporary rather than permanent and that they would no longer be needed once “a level playing field” had been achieved for all American citizens. Then, in September 24, 1965, Johnson signed Executive Order No. 11246 on affirmative action, including provisions for enforcement.

In the period immediately after Johnson acted, affirmative action was widely applauded or grudgingly accepted, while outright vocal opposition was minimal. Most Americans in this era of civil rights seemed to acknowledge the fairness of the concept, particularly its compensatory and temporary features.

Although Democratic presidents initiated executive orders for affirmative action in the 1960s, winning widespread support from many in their party outside of the white South, Republicans generally opposed the policy. But with the prodding of African American Assistant Secretary of Labor Arthur Fletcher, Republican President Richard M. Nixon issued an executive order in 1969 requiring goals and timetables for the employment of blacks in the construction industry in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Nixon explained that although he was not imposing quotas, the Philadelphia order was necessary because both the construction industry and the craft unions in that city had been egregiously and openly hostile to fair employment for blacks.

But soon a backlash developed and was partially endorsed by Republican officeholders and other conservative spokespersons. Increasingly, white males particularly claimed that affirmative action programs were denying qualified or more qualified whites placed in jobs and in colleges and universities in favor of less qualified African Americans.

Backlash and Defense

By the 1970s, some of those who claimed to be victims of reverse discrimination on account of race began to file lawsuits. In 1977, in the first major U.S. Supreme Court case on the issue, *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, Bakke had applied for admission to the medical school

of the University of California at Davis. On two occasions, his applications for admission had been denied solely on the basis that he was a white male. He pointed out that less qualified minority applicants had been admitted under the university's separate admissions program for minorities, in which sixteen out of a hundred places had been reserved for them. A divided Supreme Court ordered Bakke admitted and struck down the medical school's "inflexible quota systems." But it upheld the legality of affirmative action without quotas.

While anti-affirmative action forces took some comfort in the admission of Bakke and the elimination of quotas, they continued to rail against the legality and fairness of affirmative action. They argued that race-based policies and practices had no place in the American constitutional system, as the Civil Rights Movements had demonstrated. Although many had been opposed to the Martin Luther King Jr.-led Civil Rights Movement, they began to use King's own words to affirm a requirement for "a color-blind society." They contended that, as a nation of immigrants, many American ethnicities had faced disadvantages, but through hard work and perseverance had "pulled themselves up by their bootstraps." They suggested that biological and socially pathological differences were at the root of the inabilities of blacks, particularly, to advance without "preferential treatment." Rather than using initiative and responsibility to climb the ladder to success, the critics charged, African Americans opted for handouts and free rides, preferring to play the role of victims to institutionalized white racism.

Proponents of affirmative action, while not always supportive of the Supreme Court's position on quotas in the *Bakke* case, were delighted that the Court had sanctioned affirmative action. Although many of them remained convinced that the setting of representative goals to redress previous and continuing discriminations could best serve national interests, they consoled themselves that much of this could still be achieved voluntarily rather than being compulsory as long as affirmative action, generally, was still the law of the land. But they often found themselves on the defensive as anti-affirmative action individuals, in and out of government, employed essays and treatises, oratory, the media, and lower courts in their backlash.

The pro-affirmative action individuals and groups countered with their own rhetoric, treatises, and media appearances. Among other things, they argued that the comparisons of African Americans with other ethnic immigrants were unfair. In the first place, African Americans had not been voluntary immigrants seeking a better life, but had been brought to American shores in chains. Then, they endured more than two centuries of bondage, followed by nearly another century of second-class citizenship, marked by segregation, discrimination, exploitation, and dehumanization. Although they agreed that affirmative action measures should be temporary, it would take much longer for disadvantaged minorities to reach the requisite even playing field, particularly with white males.

Complicating the affirmative action debate was the entrance of African American neoconservatives, some of whom had been recipients of affirmative action. These individuals opined that affirmative action programs demeaned blacks by suggesting that they could not compete with whites for jobs and for college and university admissions without favoritism. Adopting some of the same individualist arguments of white conservatives, they blamed social pathologies for the disadvantages that blacks exhibited. They also often cited a long list of black achievers who had succeeded in American society without preferential treatment. One such neoconservative was Clarence Thomas, who served as Chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission under Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush from 1982 to 1990. In 1991, Bush appointed Thomas to the Supreme Court in 1991, where he played a role in the Court's increasing intervention in this area.

Supreme Court Rulings Narrow Affirmative Action's Scope

Although the U.S. public debate over affirmative action has been long and often bitter and divisive, both sides agree that the ultimate resolution of the matter will be in the U.S. Supreme Court. Since *Bakke*, the Court has heard several cases involving the issue. In these, including *Fullilove v. Klutznick* (1980), *Wygant v. Jackson Board of Education* (1986), *City of Richmond v. Crown* (1995), and *Hopwood v. University of Texas Law School* (1996), the

Court has narrowed the application of affirmative action programs. In addition to consistently ruling against quotas, the Court has limited relief to minorities and women in affirmative action cases to specified periods of past and direct discrimination. Then, in 2003, in *Gratz v. Bollinger* and *Grutter v. Bollinger*, the high court seemed to move away from the affirmative action dictum of compensatory relief for past discrimination.

Both of the landmark cases involved the University of Michigan. The issue in *Gratz* stemmed from the undergraduate school's use of an admissions policy that rates applicants numerically, with additional points being awarded to minorities. In *Grutter*, the university's law school had used an individualized process for admissions. In a five to four ruling, the Supreme Court decided in *Gratz* that the University of Michigan's undergraduate school had not narrowly tailored its use of race in undergraduate admissions in accordance with the "individualized consideration" formula that the Court had previously approved for affirmative action admissions; thus, the policy was unconstitutional. On the other hand, in a six to three decision in *Grutter*, the Court ruled that the Michigan Law School had used an "individualized consideration" formula in which race was only one of several factors determining an applicant's qualifications for admission; thus, the law school's policy was acceptable.

The Michigan cases, although producing different practical results, upheld the concept of affirmative action as long as race was only one of several factors considered for admissions. The Court justified its ruling in *Grutter* on the basis that a consideration of race furthered a compelling national interest "in obtaining the educational benefits that flow from a diverse student body." Writing for the majority, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor wrote in *Grutter*, "In order to cultivate a set of leaders with legitimacy in the eyes of the citizenry, it is necessary that the path to leadership be visibly open to talented and qualified individuals of every race and ethnicity." Thus, on the thread of diversity, affirmative action in college and university admissions survived for another day. However, the Court made it clear that the policy was still considered a temporary one and that its termination could be forecast in the two or three decades.

During these periods, the Court made only two major decisions where quotas were permitted. In *Fullilove v. Klutznick* (1980), the Court allowed a modest quota of 10 percent of congressional appropriations for public works to be set aside for qualified minority contractors. The Court reasoned that the quota was narrowly focused and limited and was not strict and inflexible. Then, in 1987, in *United States v. Paradise*, the Court allowed a plan to place at least 25 percent of blacks in the Alabama Department of Public Safety because that state had consistently and overtly defied efforts to desegregate the Alabama State Patrol.

Meanwhile, outside the courts, individual states were taking decisive actions against affirmative action. These included several ballot initiatives: Proposition 209 in California (1997), Initiative 200 in the state of Washington (1998), and Initiative 424 in Nebraska (2008). However, Amendment 46, a ban on affirmative action, failed in Colorado in 2008. The legislature of Florida effectively ended affirmative action in that state in 2000.

With the election of the first African American, Barack Obama, to the presidency in 2008, new questions arose as to the necessity and viability of affirmative action in the United States of America. Obama, while endorsing the continuation of the policy, suggested that it might in the future be more applicable to disadvantages of class rather than of race. He cited the examples of his two daughters who did not need any helping hand to succeed in society, while other Americans, disadvantaged by their station in life, regardless of race or ethnicity, might need some uplift. Thus, it does seem that in the United States of America, socially and politically, time is running out for affirmative action as we have known it.

Affirmative Action Across the Globe

Yet in the rest of the world, several affirmative action programs exist and for the most part, their continuation does not seem to be imminently threatened. For example in Brazil, compensatory and preferential admissions to some universities are available to racial minorities. Canada has an affirmative action program for women, the disabled, aboriginal people, and visible minorities. China has preferential policies for top jobs in

government for ethnic minorities and women and for ethnic minorities' admissions to universities. South Africa provides for economic equality in the workplace by advancing people with disabilities, people from rural areas, white women, and all people of color. India has caste-based quotas in education and government employment and in university admissions. In New Zealand, preferential policies have been used to provide greater university access for Maori and other persons of Polynesian descent.

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See also [Equality and Egalitarianism](#); [Ethnicity and Political Thought](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Race and Racism](#)

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African Political Thought

African political thought

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African Political Thought

Modern African political thought began in the eighteenth century as a global response by Africans, on the continent and in the African diaspora, to the transatlantic slave trade and to slavery. They protested the brutality of slavery and struggled to end it. From this beginning, the course of African political thought focused primarily on arguments made in defense of the human rights of Africans. Theories were developed to justify emerging movements of discontent that directly challenged slavery, racism, colonialism, and underdevelopment in postindependent Africa. Often, these theories were expressed in literature, memoirs, popular culture, and music, as well as in speeches and more traditional political documents.

African Abolitionism, Nationalism, and Negritude

Africans forced into slavery reflected on their new situation and reacted to the gross injustices perpetrated against them in the name of a Western civilizing mission by developing African abolitionism, a series of arguments written to assert the humanity of Africans and the urgent need to end slavery by describing the dehumanizing effects of slavery upon the enslaved and slave owners. The autobiographical slave narrative *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, The African* is the best-known example of this development of African

protest literature. Published in 1789, this work was widely read and became an important weapon of the abolitionist movement. Equiano was the first to create an identity that was pan-African or continental in scope, and it included a commitment to activism for the rights of all Africans in Africa, Europe, and the New World. Recent scholarship indicates that Equiano might have been born in the New World. This possibility, as well as the contents of his narrative, underscores the complex interplay of ideas between Africans who lived on the continent and those who lived in the African diaspora. The influence of African abolitionism continued to dominate the thinking of nineteenth- and twentieth-century African writers generally and can be seen in the later writings of such activists as C. L. R. James (1901–1989), Eric Williams (1911–81), and George Padmore (1903–59).

Ideas of cultural nationalism and negritude developed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as preludes to the movements for independence from colonialism that later were formulated as theories of African nationalism. The right to respect the differences of the Negro race in terms of its culture, traditions, and its essence was demanded by intellectuals who found wanting the indirect rule of the British as well as the assimilationist policies of the French and Portuguese in Africa. The European powers weakly disguised their feeling of racial superiority and demanded a right to continue to rule over Africans who were “unripe for independence.” The African movement in British West Africa calling for African clergy to run independent churches and the demands for control over educational institutions eventually led to demands for a greater role in the governing colonial legislative councils. The educated elite wanted Africans to be trained by Africans with an African outlook and demanded the early foundation of a West African university. Men such as Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832–1912), John Mensah-Sarbah (1864–1910), and J. E. Casely Hayford (1866–1930) championed the pan-African cause of an Ethiopia that would be unbound and free to develop along natural lines.

While Aimé Césaire (1913–2008) from Martinique was the first author to use the term *negritude*, many others continued to develop this idea into a full-fledged philosophy of a mode of being that distinguished the black African from the European or the Asian. In the 1930s, African and West

Indian students studying in France contested the colonial order by focusing on the essential identity of the black race. Despite their references to physical features supposedly common to blacks, their concept of race was not biological but cultural. They challenged the claims about universality of French culture and juxtaposed it to a culture that represented the collective consciousness of blacks in Africa and in the diaspora. Negritude was not based on a mere description of the character of blacks but on the amalgam of influences stemming from geography, history, and ethnicity that created a collective soul. Léopold Sedar Senghor (1906–2001) became the greatest explicator of negritude. He defined this theory as the sum total of the cultural values of Africa. Although blacks used reason, their version was imbued with emotion, their dominant trait. The logical intelligence of the European lacked the sensuous nature and spiritual component of the African outlook. In Senghor's mind, negritude spawned a version of African nationalism and socialism. However, steeped in the artistic expression of traditional African culture, it appeared as a conservative return to the past rather than as an effective political rallying call. Nevertheless, negritude represented to Senghor an expression of the self-reflection of the black man that was necessary at the time to overcome the demoralizing effects of colonialism. These ideas in the philosophy of negritude were often expressed in poetry and literature and were to influence many philosophers and activists for decades.

Black Consciousness and Colonialism

The notion of an African human nature was subsequently elaborated upon by others, including Steve Biko (1946–1977), who was beaten to death by the South African police. Biko spoke to the psychological impact of colonialism on the colonized in South Africa. His philosophy of black consciousness attacked the apartheid equation of blackness as identical with inferiority. Instead, Biko defined blackness as a mental attitude that should be embraced and used to create solidarity among the oppressed. To be able to imagine a free self was the first step toward liberation, although black consciousness was more than a means to an end. The necessity of beginning with a change in consciousness was made essential by the specific form of colonization suffered by Africans in South Africa. There, the contact between Africans and Europeans had been between two unequal parties; the

European culture had become dominant and the African culture had been destroyed and twisted, and ideas of inferiority had become deeply embedded in Africans' own sense of self-worth. Thus, freedom for Africans had to include a black consciousness that rejected Western values and promoted another, African, set of beliefs that placed humans at the center of society.

Theories of decolonization began to emerge well before the end of the colonial period of the mid-twentieth century. These early stirrings of nationalism in Africa expressed the desire for self-determination along three trajectories: one, independence for already-existing traditional ethnic groups; two, for territorial entities created by the colonialists; or three, a single continentwide unity envisioned in racial terms that included a return to Africa of those in the diaspora.

The first argument is exemplified in the writings of James Africanus Beale Horton (1835–83), who used his medical knowledge to refute arguments of the biological inferiority of Africans. In his book *West African Countries and Peoples* (1865), he took equality as his starting point and argued that Africans could develop their traditional ethnic units into independent modern nation-states. Decades later, Obafemi Awolowo (1909–87) of Nigeria's Action Group continued in this vein, advocating regional autonomy within an independent Nigeria based on a federal rather than on unitary structure. The third argument, the pan-African option, was widely considered more inspirational than practical as its most prominent supporter, Kwame Nkrumah (1909–72), led the progressive crusade for continental unity. More cautious African nationalists, who were more moderate and less revolutionary, would only accept a loose confederation of independent nation-states. The institutional expression of pan-Africanism, the Organization of African Unity, established in 1963 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, was based upon the second argument of accepting the colonial boundaries for independent African countries. Indeed, history shows that the winning approach was to fight for independence on the basis of the existing colonial territories. African nationalism was a movement of the majority within each separate colony that fought a successful campaign to eliminate colonial control.

The Era of Independence

The independence of African countries ushered in a new era for African political theorists. Leaders, swept into power by majorities of Africans, defended their victory over foreign minorities as the triumph of a return to democracy against colonial dictatorships. To many Africans, the foundation of modern democracy was seen as a return of African control over African affairs. This idea stressed participation and mobilization of the masses. It also included an emphasis on ends rather than on means. So long as the leaders ruled in the interests of the African peoples rather than in the interest of the colonial powers, all that was necessary was, as was often said, “talking till you agree.” There was no need for a formal opposition or competing political parties. One party rule was justified by many as the democratic will of the African peoples who had voted overwhelmingly for a single party to end colonial rule.

Some newly elected heads of state rejected capitalism and embraced socialism as the road to economic development. This decision took place at the height of the Cold War period when most African countries won their independence and their leaders were forced to choose allies in the international system. Some, however, declared that a Third Way must be found. Nonalignment and socialism with an African twist was their answer. Julius Nyerere (1922–99), the first president of independent Tanganyika, later known as Tanzania after it merged with Zanzibar, was the most prominent theorist of this strand of thinking about development. Nyerere conceived of African socialism (*ujamaa* in Swahili) as a system based on traditional African values where all members of a community had equal rights and opportunities, no one was exploited, and everyone did his or her fair share of work. He proposed collectivized agriculture and the nationalization of other sectors of the economy. This proposal was done with the expectation that productivity would rise and the material needs of everyone in the society, especially in the rural areas, would be met before any individual would live in luxury.

A slightly different version of socialism was developed in Egypt after it won its independence in 1952. Gamal Abdel Nasser (1918–70) exerted a great deal of influence in North Africa and in the Middle East as he

attempted to implement a theory of Arab socialism that had much in common with Nyerere's ideas of African socialism. Nasser was one of the founders of the non-aligned movement along with Jawaharlal Nehru (1889–1964) of India and Josip Broz Tito (1892–1980) of Yugoslavia. The 1955 Bandung Conference on Non-Alignment held in Bandung, Indonesia, promoted the national development of former colonies around the world. Leaders of twenty-nine independent states in Africa and Asia attended the conference. Nasser used his idea of three mutually reinforcing Arab, African, and Muslim concentric circles to theorize on the role of Egypt in international affairs. He saw Egyptians as the guardians of the continent's northern gate, constituting the connecting link with the outer world and attempted to unify the African, Arab, and Muslim world for development purposes.

Nkrumah, the first African to lead Ghana after the end of colonialism, came to prefer the term *scientific socialism in Africa* and ultimately argued for class struggle on an international scale. While Nkrumah's early work *Consciencism* saw traditional African societies as classless, the neocolonial period saw the emergence of such divisions as an extension of class struggles occurring in Western industrial societies. After gaining and losing the political kingdom in a military coup, Nkrumah developed a full-blown theory of neocolonialism in his book *Neocolonialism: The Highest Stage of Imperialism* that recognized the continued domination of the former colonial powers in economic terms.

Frantz Fanon (1925–61) and Amilcar Cabral (1924–73) developed theories of liberation and revolution that were critical of the early nationalists. Fanon trained as a psychiatrist and practiced in Algeria under French rule. Cabral was an agronomist from Guinea Bissau, West Africa. Their respective disciplines were used as frameworks to create a new approach to liberation theories. The Marxist concept of class was revised so that it could help analyze African populations and determine their role in the struggle for true liberation. Fanon felt strongly that the spontaneous violence of the peasants must be directed by a new wave of intellectuals for liberation to take place in the psyche of the formerly colonized. Cabral organized urban sympathizers to educate and lead the more egalitarian peasants in the revolutionary struggle to take back control over the national productive

forces and hence their history. However, victory for the nationalist parties only resulted in neocolonial puppets ruling in the interests of their former colonial masters. Liberation could not take place unless the inheritors of the revolutionary state, the petty bourgeoisie, continued the revolutionary movement for change by committing what Cabral called class suicide. Without this transformation, the rights of the common African peoples would continue to be unrecognized by the postcolonial state.

While the legacies of colonialism continued to concern political thinkers, new and urgent issues emerged with formal independence and the maturing of the African nation-state. The end of the Cold War created another set of political circumstances that allowed for a fuller development of civil space and of a vibrant civil society that also addressed the issues of the day. These issues included the corruption of political elites, the degradation of the environment, persistent poverty and the economic inequality between groups and classes in society, and the lack of political democracy. Sometimes inequality was characterized as taking place between men and women, at other times between the rich and poor, or between ethnic groups. One important contribution made by African political thinkers has to do with framing and thinking of ways in which societies can heal after experiencing extreme forms of social and political trauma, such as genocide.

Development of Postcolonial Theory

Today, African political thought's most significant contribution is to *postcolonial theory*, a broad term used to describe theories devised to understand the formerly colonized world. Beginning with the Bandung Conference of 1955, its founders include Nasser, Fanon, Cabral, Marcus Garvey (1887–1940) and Walter Rodney (1942–80, Guyana). This school of thought dovetails with the contributions made by decolonization theory in its analysis of the ways in which colonial political structures continue to affect contemporary African politics. Postcolonial theory offers a variety of approaches to understanding the postindependence era and proffers different solutions to the issues of the day. African theorists have developed a sustained examination of the postcolonial African state that often is a searing criticism of the elites who utilize power in their self-interest,

sometimes expressed in theoretical works while at other times in literature and music. The work done by Achille Mbembe (Cameroon) is particularly noteworthy in this regard. Other contributors and activists include Chinua Achebe (1930–, Nigeria), Kwame Anthony Appiah (1954–, Ghana), Fela Anikulapo-Kuti (1930–1997, Nigeria), Alaa al Aswany (1957–, Egypt), Steve Biko, Wangari Maathai (1940–2011, Kenya), Ken Sara-Wiwo (1941–95, Nigeria), Wole Soyinka (1934–, Nigeria), Ngugi wa Thiong’o (1938–, Kenya), Nawal el Saadawi (1931–, Egypt), and Desmond Tutu (1931–, South Africa).

One issue of significance to political theorists and activists is environmental degradation, especially of the land that in turn impacts the livelihood and way of life of many groups. In Nigeria, Sara-Wiwo spoke out against the activities of the transnational oil companies that had resulted in an environmental catastrophe in the Niger Delta and for the Ogoni people. The oil companies’ activities were accomplished with the cooperation and collusion of the Nigerian government. He described the Ogoni as being similar to the Aborigines of Australia in the dispossession of their land and the destruction of their culture. For Sara-Wiwo, the Ogoni were living under an indigenous colonialism, an idea taken from Awolowo, and they deserved to have a protected status. Sara-Wiwo attempted to provide the Ogoni people this protection by taking their cause to the United Nations. He also called for the revision of the current federal form of governance in Nigeria to allow for all minority groups to participate in politics and to distribute economic resources more equitably. Sara-Wiwo’s execution along with nine of his followers by the Nigerian government provoked worldwide condemnation, and his call for an end to the corruption of a postcolonial regime is continued in the writing of others, most notably, Soyinka. In East Africa, activism to combat deforestation and soil erosion and the impact this had on Kenyans’ lives was initiated by Wangari Maathai, who in 1977 launched the Green Belt Movement, a grassroots women’s movement that planted thirty million trees in the country. Maathai was also critical of the corruption and the patriarchal nature of the Kenyan power structure, which marginalized women.

In North Africa the corruption of the political elites led to three revolutions in Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt in 2011. Alaa al Aswany, an Egyptian dentist,

journalist, and novelist, criticized the corruption of the Hosni Mubarak regime and its widespread use of torture and violence. This apparatus of despotism went hand-in-hand with extreme forms of nepotism and favoritism and a blatant disregard for the human rights of Egyptians. For al Aswany, the solution was the adoption of selected key principles of democracy: free and fair elections, a meritocracy, and respect for the rights of workers and the human dignity of all citizens. Postcolonial feminist writings had made many of the same points for decades: for example, Nawal el Saadawi, an Egyptian feminist, novelist, and physician, has written extensively about the imbalance of power between men and women, the patriarchal power structure that is rife with corruption and hypocrisy and that depends on the subservience of women to men and to religious authority.

With the end of the apartheid regime, the question of how to resolve the great injustices perpetrated upon the majority of South African society, especially upon its African population by the state, became an issue of pressing importance. This question was to reappear in Rwanda in 1994 and later in Sierra Leone. The need to establish processes to ensure justice for those who suffered from violence was urgent, along with the need for peace, security, and reconciliation. Yet the magnitude of the violence perpetrated upon society made traditional Western forms of justice impractical and inapplicable. Indeed, Bishop Desmond Tutu did not consider Western forms of justice, as established after World War II, even desirable. He articulated a different philosophy that was adopted in South Africa's solution: the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which stressed reconciliation as opposed to retribution. The TRC was based in part on the Southern Bantu notion of *ubuntu* or forgiveness, and such courts have been widely copied and altered to fit the circumstances in many places, including Rwanda in its adoption of *gacaca* or grassroots courts and in Cambodia. The global appeal of this alternative to Western ideas of justice constitutes one of the most significant aspects of contemporary African political thought.

The multiplicity, pluralism, and richness of African ideas should no longer be ignored by political theorists in the West. In an increasingly interdependent world, there is an urgent need to comprehend the ways in

which groups and nations understand and shape their political environment. Modern African political theory has dealt with the most salient issues pertaining to human rights since the eighteenth century and has insisted, among other things, that human values and dignity must be preserved in the face of adversity.

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Hoda Zaki

See also [Apartheid](#); [Empire and Political Thought](#); [Fanon, Frantz](#); [Nyerere, Julius](#); [Pan-Africanism](#)

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Alienation

Alienation

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Alienation

Alienation has been defined as a negative separation, estrangement, or disengagement of persons from political processes and structures. Broadly, alienation signifies the aberrant fragmentation of things that naturally belong together. In a democracy, people are alienated when they are disconnected or divorced from participation in political life since democracy entails that political power belongs to every citizen. Cynicism about political organizations, a sense of powerlessness, and loss of community attachments are manifestations of alienation.

The concept of alienation was introduced to modern political thought by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, who used the term to describe the unhappy consciousness of oppressed persons in the European Middle Ages, dissociated from favorable social relations in this world and hence longing for freedom and contentment in a transcendent world. Hegel rejected the claim that political relations are or ought to be based on a social contract, arguing instead that the ethical nature of human beings and civil society form the foundation of political life. The freedom of the individual citizen to will values and beliefs that are universally held would constitute social and political harmony and thus might overcome alienation.

Influenced by Hegel, Karl Marx brought the concept into prominence by arguing that alienation could only be overcome by eliminating wealth and class differences between oppressed persons and the bourgeoisie. Contrary to Hegel, Marx believed that estrangement was not caused by an unhappy

consciousness hoping for redemption in a heavenly realm, but by the material conditions of one's life and the political economy in which one lives. For Marx, the fragmenting effects of alienation are rooted in economic inequalities, which are the product of sociopolitical structures under the influence of capital. Despite differences in terminology and tone between his early and late writings, he remained committed to the idea that alienation could only be reduced by some version of communism. Marx argued that capital, especially through the form of capitalism, had the power to transform itself through various crises, to reinvent itself, so that capitalism would continue to wield power over the sociopolitical circumstances of ordinary working people. Hence, the disenfranchising effects of capitalism may be controlled only through some form of market socialism.

During the early twentieth century, many political groups, social activists, and scholars influenced by Marx formulated critiques of and responses to alienation. In Eastern Europe and Asia, various forms of communism arose. In Latin America, theologians combined religious ideas and values with neo-Marxian perspectives to form the liberation theology movement, focusing on social justice and a preferential option for the poor. The Frankfurt school, a group of scholars that formed the Institute for Social Research in Western Europe and later the New School of Social Research in the United States, developed neo-Marxian analyses of social and political problems that came to be known as critical theory. Critical theorists challenged Western imperialism, privately held means of production and resources, and other aspects of mass culture and personal existence.

In the mid- to late-twentieth century, analyses of alienation turned toward economic disparities, political affiliations of the working classes, the power of the military-industrial complex, and broader social aspects of life. Particularly in the United States, the Vietnam War, Watergate, Iran-Contra, Reaganomics, the war on terrorism, and purported tax cuts for the richest citizens all contributed to a general decrease of trust in government and political participation and to increases in social tension.

The collapse of authoritarian communism in Europe shifted attitudes toward the presence of alienation in society, prompting some to cast doubts about

its negative effects or to deny its existence altogether. Consequently, from the latter part of the twentieth into the twenty-first century, research into the concept of alienation coalesced around empirical and measurable aspects. These include community involvement, senses of empowerment, and political participation, using tools such as job satisfaction and life satisfaction surveys and extensive polling and voter turnout data. Civil unrest, ethnic genocide, regime changes, and political overthrows of dictatorships are also indications of contemporary manifestations of alienation. Individuals and interest groups, many uninfluenced by the Marxian tradition, continue to assess and work against the corrosive effects of political disengagement and loss of social capital, or the advantages gained by effective social networks. Communitarianism emphasizes the importance of community and social interaction and the need to renew forms of public life. The rise of identity politics, focusing on forms of collective consciousness and differentiation, critiques new social movements in light of homogenizing effects of political participation and the extent to which heterogeneity is tolerated. There is also tremendous interest in the impact of social media on various forms of alienation, and how it may contribute to social change.

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See also [Communitarianism and Liberalism](#); [Critical Theory](#); [Liberation Theology](#); [Liberty](#); [Theories of](#); [Market Socialism](#)

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Luke Ferretter Luke Ferretter

Althusser, Louis

Althusser, Louis

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Althusser, Louis

Louis Althusser was born in October 1918 near Algiers. A devout Catholic in his youth, he founded a student Christian movement and even considered a religious vocation. He was called up for military service in September 1939, and in June 1940, was taken prisoner-of-war, spending the rest of World War II in a German prison camp. After the war, he became a tutor in philosophy at France's elite university the *École normale supérieure*, where he remained for the rest of his career. In October 1948, like many French intellectuals of the period, Althusser joined the Communist Party. Throughout the 1960s, he published a series of highly influential studies of the philosophy of Karl Marx, collected in *For Marx* (1965) and *Reading Capital* (1965). Censured for these works by the French Communist Party in 1966, Althusser spent the next few years revising his philosophical positions and publishing several essays of self-criticism. During the late 1970s, he wrote an increasingly bitter series of articles and letters criticizing the theory and the practice of the Communist Party, whose continued electoral losses in the face of projected victories indicated to him a party out of touch with the reality of French political life.

Althusser suffered from bipolar disorder throughout his life. In November 1980, following the worst of his depressions, he killed his wife and companion of over thirty years, Hélène Rytman. Amid much public controversy, he was declared unfit to plead to the crime on the grounds that his mental state rendered him irresponsible for his actions. He spent most of the rest of his life in psychiatric hospitals, his career as a teacher and public

intellectual over. He died in October 1990. After his death, tens of thousands of pages of unpublished manuscripts, including some ten books, were found in his archives. Many of these have been published during the 1990s, massively altering the public reception and understanding of his thought.

Marxist Humanism

The period following World War II saw the rise, in European philosophical circles, of Marxist humanism. Humanism, as Althusser once defined it, is any system of thought that places man at the center of the world. Althusser was profoundly convinced, against almost all of his contemporaries, that Marxism was not such a system. In the 1930s, Karl Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, written in 1844, had been published for the first time. This is an early work of Marx's, in which he explicitly describes the problem of capitalism and the solution of communism in humanist terms. Influenced by these texts, many philosophers, from Catholics to existentialists, became interested in Marx's work and began to incorporate it into their own. In the late 1950s, following the denunciation of former Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin by his successor Nikita Khrushchev, communist intellectuals too began to argue, on the basis of Marx's early work, that Marxism was essentially a humanist form of thought.

The Epistemological Break

Althusser vigorously denies that Marxism is humanist. Marx's thought does not develop from the humanism of his early work into the historical materialism, although Marxist tradition describes Marx's mature work as this system of thought. Such a development is inconceivable, Althusser argues, since every system of thought has its own internal unity, its own set of problems that it poses and solves. The set of questions asked by humanism and that asked by historical materialism are simply incommensurable with one another. Marxist tradition describes historical materialism as a science, the science of the history of society, because it produces true knowledge of this history. It was necessary for Marx absolutely to reject the humanism of his early work, Althusser argues, in

order to found this science. What occurs in Marx's thought in 1845, he claims, the year Marx wrote the *Theses on Feuerbach* and *The German Ideology*, is an epistemological break, a phrase that effectively means a scientific revolution. This phrase is taken from the philosopher of science Gaston Bachelard, who understood the history of science to progress by a series of such breaks, both with common sense and with previous scientific theories, in which completely new kinds of theory are founded. Marx did precisely this, Althusser argues, in his authentically Marxist works. He founded the science of history. As in all scientific revolutions, he did not just give new answers to the old questions; he asked a completely new set of questions. Before 1845, no one had ever truly understood the history of human society; Marx, for the first time, discovered how to do so.

Structuralism

Althusser devotes considerable space in his major work of the 1960s to expounding the details of this new science, of which Marx, he argued, had left only the cornerstones. Here, we need to mention the influence of structuralism on Althusser's thought. Althusser is sometimes described as a structuralist Marxist. This description is a mistake. Structuralism, rather, was the intellectual milieu in which Althusser worked out his conception of authentically Marxist science and with which he shared certain basic approaches. Structuralism was an interdisciplinary movement that became the height of intellectual fashion in France in the 1960s. We will mention here only what Althusser has in common with its major exponents. First, structuralism was an antihumanist method of inquiry. It understood the objects it examined—from kinship relations to novels to the unconscious mind—as products not of individual human beings but of social systems. A novel, for example, was not the product of the genius of its author but of the unconscious system of rules for writing novels in the society in which it was produced. In a similar way, Althusser believes that a society, as Marx had truly understood it, is not a collection of individuals but a system, the nature of which determines the lives of all the individuals within it. Second, structuralism understands the objects of its inquiry as systems of elements in relationship. The meaning of a given passage in a novel does not consist in its relationship to reality but in its relationship to all the other passages and kinds of passage in the novel. Althusser understands society in the same

way, as a system made up of elements that can only be understood in terms of their relationship to all the other elements in the system.

The Science of History

Like other scientific revolutions, Althusser argues that the revolution in the science of history founded by Marx involves new terms and new relationships between those terms. In place of the term *man*, the fundamental concept of the ideology of humanism, Marx puts the *mode of production*, the fundamental concept of the science of historical materialism. The mode of production—the ways in which society produces the material conditions of its members' lives—is the most fundamental reality of social life for Marx. He develops a new lexicon of terms in order to expound this insight—terms such as *class*, *ideology*, *base*, and *superstructure*. By speaking of the mode of production as the economic base of a society, Marx means that it determines everything else that occurs in that society. All the institutions (the legal system or the education system, for example) and all the discourses (philosophical ideas or novels, for example) of that society can be described as a superstructure arising from, and caused to be the kind of things that they are, by that base. Marx's friend and coauthor Friedrich Engels adds that the base is only the ultimately determining element of the superstructure. Althusser develops this principle in detail.

A society, he argues, consists of numerous levels of *practice*. By practice, he means a process in which a certain set of raw materials is transformed into a certain product by a certain means of production, or combination of labor and technology. In political practice, for example, the raw materials of social relations are transformed into a new set of social relations by means of political organizations and the policies on which their actions are based. When Engels claimed that economic practice determines all the other practices in society only in the last instance, Althusser argues, what he meant was this. Each social practice has a relative autonomy, meaning that it develops according to its own logic and not simply as a result (as Marxist tradition has often claimed) of the economic base of the society in which it occurs. A novel, for example, is the kind of novel that it is partly because of the economic system of the society in which it was written. But it is also the

kind of novel that it is for purely literary reasons—the novelist’s responses to earlier novels, for example. Furthermore, as Althusser makes clear, it is the kind of novel it is for a host of other reasons, each pertaining to a different kind of social practice, and indeed to a complex relationship between those social practices. For example, it may be determined by the legal system, the education system, the publishing industry, philosophical or religious beliefs, the institutions of marriage and family, or political events within the society in which it is written, to name only a few. Furthermore, each of these influencing factors is itself influenced, in varying degrees by all the other factors. This, therefore, is how all social events are to be understood, Althusser argues, as overdetermined, or determined in a complex and mutually influential way by all the practices in the society in which they occur. Economic practice, as Marxist tradition has always known, will be determinant in the last instance, but as Althusser puts it, the last instance never comes. Every event in every society is a product of the complex interrelationship between all the social practices that comprise that society.

Ideology

One of Althusser’s most lasting contributions to modern political thought has been his development of the Marxist theory of ideology. *Ideology* is the name Marxist tradition gives to all those discourses that misrepresent the reality that the economic base of society consists of the exploitation of one class of its members by another. Marxist tradition has typically described ideology in terms of consciousness, comparing an individual’s consciousness of his or her social conditions to the reality of those conditions. Althusser argues, however, that ideology is primarily an unconscious phenomenon. It comes to us in the form of obviousness—of common sense, popular opinion, what people can take for granted. The messages mediated to us by the advertisements with which we are constantly surrounded in contemporary society, for example, but to which we rarely pay critical attention are the kind of messages that make up the ideological world in which we live. Indeed ideology is our lived world itself, Althusser argues, our more or less conscious everyday understanding of society and of our places in it. In a later essay, he writes that ideology represents an imaginary relationship to individuals’ real conditions of

existence. It is a kind of wish fulfillment, giving people an account of how they like to think of their lives rather than of the reality of their lives in the capitalist mode of production.

Ideological State Apparatuses

In his essay “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” written a year after the failure of the French Communist Party to respond to the revolutionary events of May 1968 in France, Althusser develops the concept of the ideological state apparatus (ISA) (Althusser 1971). Marxist tradition has always regarded the modern state an institution that serves the interests of the bourgeoisie, or owners of capital. The state defends these interests with what Althusser calls the *repressive state apparatus*—the police, the courts, the prisons, the army, and the like. It also defends these interests with what he calls the *ideological state apparatuses*—that is, institutions that serve to perpetuate the economic dominance of the bourgeoisie not by repression but by ideology. These institutions include the church, the education system, the family, cultural institutions such as the theater or the cinema, the media, the legal system, and the like. These institutions, Althusser argues, along with the practices and rituals that comprise membership in them structure the dominant ideas of class society. Indeed, ideology exists in no other form than in the practices and rituals of the ISAs. ISAs do not develop out of our ideological beliefs; rather, our ideological beliefs develop out of membership in and participation in the practices of ISAs.

The Subject of ideology

These beliefs are unified, Althusser claims, by the fundamental category of all ideology, the subject. All ideology, he writes, whether it comes to us through attending a trade union meeting or going to the cinema, “hails or interpellates individuals as subjects” (Althusser 1971, 173). The French verb *interpeller*, translated in this phrase as hails or interpellates, means to call out to someone. It is also the verb used when the police interrogate a suspect. Like the police, ideology works for the state. When Althusser says that ideology interpellates individuals as subjects, he means that it has the

effect of making an individual believe that he or she is a subject, the origin and agent of his or her own thoughts and actions. According to the Marxist science of history, however, this is not true: it is the mode of production that determines every material condition of people's lives. But ordinarily, people do not think of their lives in these scientific terms because ideology is persuading them that they are, by and large, in control of their own destinies. By doing so, it ensures that in reality people remain subjects in a second sense—subjected to the authority of the state. Although it is during the period of industrial capitalism in particular that the subject becomes a category of political philosophy, Althusser argues that it has always been the fundamental category of ideology—it has simply had other names, such as the soul or God. In every case, by deluding us that we are subjects, in the sense of free and autonomous agents, ideology ensures that in fact we remain subjects, in the sense of subjected beings, of the class that dominates the society in which we live.

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See also [Engels, Friedrich](#); [Ideology](#); [Marx, Karl](#)

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American Political Thought

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American Political Thought

For many Americans, American political thought consists primarily of celebration of the Declaration of Independence of 1776 and the Constitution of 1787, along with *The Federalist Papers*, which helped win ratification of the Constitution. But the American tradition of political thought and practice, mixing radical and conservative elements, originated much earlier. It was first rooted in the laws, religious conflicts, and economic systems of Europe transplanted by the settlers and second, in the philosophy and practices of the indigenous Americans with whom the Euro-American colonists interacted regularly in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The abiding themes of American political thought—freedom, equality, their synthesis in contending American views of justice, and democratic republicanism—have diverse and conflicting roots.

European and Indigenous Roots

First, fleeing persecution, poverty, and autocracy, British colonists arrived on American shores with their own ways of thinking, interacting, and governing. The Puritans among them were inclined them to question authority and reject hierarchies both in church and in government. Although seventeenth-century Puritans such as Cotton Mather and Massachusetts Governor John Winthrop believed that the Bible justified authoritarian governance, Harvard-educated preacher John Wise argued just the opposite:

that according to Scripture, a devout Christian congregation should be governed democratically. Roger Williams, Puritan-raised founder of the U.S. Baptist Church and of Rhode Island, pressed principles of freedom even further by arguing for tolerance of and equal political rights for believers of all stripes, including religious dissidents such as Anne Hutchinson and even nonreligious agnostics and atheists.

Second, under their colonial charters and patents, colonists locally practiced the essentials of John Locke's theory of popular governance, including belief in an initial state of nature, natural law, individual rights, emphasis on private property (especially land), and social and political contracts among the property-owning Christians who comprised their communities. These shared political beliefs distinguished the colonists from British subjects who believed in absolute monarchy, eventually firing the colonists' revolt against British rule. The Glorious Revolution of 1688, ending absolute monarchy in England, further justified the American colonists' belief in the admissibility of popular revolt.

In the late twentieth century, scholars such as Donald Grinde and Bruce Johansen showed that many colonists, including not only Williams but also such notable founders as Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and Thomas Paine, had close and friendly relationships with American Indian nations, especially the Iroquois. Speaking their languages, attending their treaty councils, publishing their proceedings, trading, gifting, and visiting back and forth, these influential colonists learned of Native Americans' longstanding systems of democratic rule over large areas, as well as the various institutional checks and balances they used to prevent any one group from dominating over others.

No European nation exemplified John Locke's theory of large-scale government by consent of the governed, with institutional checks and balances, accompanied by the protection of individual rights, as had numerous American Indian confederacies for centuries. These indigenous systems also contained features deemed too radical for inclusion in the original Constitution but that were later incorporated in the development of American political thought and practice, including women's right to vote, opposition to ethnic discrimination and slavery, respect for elders combined

with a voice for youth, aid for the disadvantaged, religious tolerance, environmental protection, and the equivalents of initiative, referendum, and recall.

Beginning in the 1740s, Iroquois leaders such as Canassatego urged the colonists to create their own confederation of colonies against the British. Notably, the colonial rebels at the Boston Tea Party dressed as Mohawk Indians, and the colonists used numerous native symbols and phrases in their own iconography, including the “Great Tree,” “Unite or Die,” “League of Friendship,” and the federal eagle clutching a bundle of arrows on U.S. one-dollar bills. At the Constitutional Convention of 1787, delegate James Wilson made a general reference in his notes to Iroquois precedents.

As British policy became harsher, colonial critics faulted the government for violating traditional British law, especially in Parliament’s increasingly onerous taxation policies. Middle-class, formerly loyal business and professional British Americans, felt especially aggrieved, touting what would become a core American political belief, the rule of law. These men formed the decisive group from which the leadership of the independence movement came, giving rise to the ironic characterization of the American Revolution as a revolution by due process of law. Revolutionary slogans such as “no taxation without representation” later became enshrined as cornerstones of American political thought.

The Constitution as the Centerpiece

The core American political theory of a federalist system of liberal democracy, or classical liberalism for short, emerged from the practical political considerations of the Founding Fathers, a group not so democratic or radical as 1776 revolutionaries such as Paine, Samuel Adams, and John Hancock. This 1787 group was comprised of slave owners such as Jefferson and George Washington as well as early abolitionists such as Benjamin Rush and Alexander Hamilton. It included commercial interests from the Eastern Seaboard and landowners from the South, combined small farmers with a new urban working class, and opposed large states such as New York and Virginia to small states such as Connecticut and New Hampshire. What has become known as the core American political theory and system of

government reflected key compromises among all of these self-interested entities.

The real task of nation building—and incidentally of constructing a story to go with it, that is, American political thought—began at the Constitutional Convention of 1787. Ostensibly, James Madison and Hamilton called for the convention after the failure of the Annapolis Convention of 1786 to attract enough delegates from the various states to accomplish its purpose of revising the 1781 Articles of Confederation so as to promote commerce among the states. But the practical source of the call was Shays's Rebellion of winter 1786–1787, in which the debts and frustrations of the postrevolutionary period had led to an uprising of former revolutionary soldiers and impoverished farmers in western Massachusetts. Led by Captain Daniel Shays, this rebellion forcibly closed the courts and prevented foreclosure of mortgage debts, alarming not only creditors but also the more affluent people of the times.

The risky action of separating an infant nation from its parent, England, seemed to many to portend anarchy, and the Iroquois-inspired, revolutionary Articles of Confederation had avoided creating a strong central government. Consequently, the states began to nominate their most reliable men of stature to go to Philadelphia in 1787 and to find a way to hold things together. Among the more conservative attendees, George Washington agreed to forego a meeting of the Society of Cincinnati, the organization of former Revolutionary War officers, to preside over the convention. Representing more liberal tendencies was the aging Franklin. Attendees found they had much in common: their wealth, membership in Masonic orders (fifty-one of fifty-five attendees), and experience in making republican institutions work in their diverse states. They were quite distinct from the bold group that had brought forth the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

And yet, they were more than bold enough. Meeting under agreed rules of secrecy, the convention's first major act was to violate the delegates' instructions to merely revise the Articles of Confederation—under which the country had been governed from the war to the present—and instead to draft an entirely new and comprehensive governing document. In effect, the

founders carried out a *coup d'état*, an ironic basis for an envisioned government based on the rule of law. Intense debates ensued, with the delegates deeply divided over many issues. Most controversies were decided by compromise, such as those between big states and small states, or the South and the North. But some major issues, such as enfranchisement, civil liberties, and the ultimate status of slavery, were adroitly postponed for later decision. Ratification was left to those qualified to vote in the various states—primarily propertied adult white males—acting in conventions specially called for that purpose in each state.

The Campaign for the Constitution, the *Federalist Papers*, and the Bill of Rights: Legacies for the Nineteenth Century

Since the Constitution, American political thought has blended reformist and conservative impulses, as evident in the process by which the Constitution was written and approved and in its aftermath in the nineteenth century. The Declaration of Independence had asserted the political right of an oppressed people to overthrow their oppressors. The Constitution, by contrast, was calculated to preserve the socioeconomic status quo while its soon-to-be-added (in 1791) Bill of Rights promised to protect the rights of individual Americans both from oppressive government and from majority tyranny. Americans have always taken pride in their foundational war of independence, but the pluralistic, liberal-democratic (or democratic-republican) government that evolved over the next two centuries has preserved the class society of democratic capitalism, even while extending political rights to additional classes of citizens. Consequently, a core part of American political thought has been to secure the rightful place of an economic system of private property, free-market competition, and the rights and duties of contract.

Cutting across the many interest-group cleavages of the founders was their shared ideology of classical liberalism, based on individual rights, private property, free enterprise, limited government, and the rule of law. In *The Liberal Tradition in America*, Louis Hartz argued that this unique American brand of liberalism has held such predominant sway over the political

thinking of Americans that classical-conservative and radical alternatives have struggled at the margins of the country's political discourse. Even those antipodes of mainstream American political thought Jefferson and Hamilton fell safely under the classical-liberal umbrella.

The Constitution was an object of controversy from the very start. Supporters avoided the accurate but politically unwise label of nationalists and chose Federalists instead. Opponents were left with the ambiguous label of anti-Federalists. Unaddressed by these labels were the Constitution's enabling of a strong central government; its bias in favor of property rights, hard money, and the pursuit of debtors; and its complete lack of protection for civil rights and liberties. To the extent that governing documents can shape the future, the message of this one was a guarantee that there would never be another Shays's Rebellion. Moreover, the forceful methods and unseemly haste with which the Federalists pressed for ratification raised additional questions about the political neutrality of the document itself—a point famously raised by historian Charles Beard in his 1913 book *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution*.

In this context of partisan controversy, Hamilton and Madison, aided by John Jay, wrote a series of papers addressed to the people of New York, a crucial state disinclined to embrace the Constitution in the ratification vote to be held in the early summer of 1788. These papers, published anonymously as the work of "Publius" in the New York newspapers, soon became known collectively as *The Federalist*, or *The Federalist Papers*, when published in book form in the spring of 1788.

The Federalist was an act of advocacy, espousing the fundamental American view that governmental checks and balances would prove the key protection against tyranny. Separation among legislative, executive, and judicial powers and the division between national and lower levels of government would prevent any particular group from running roughshod over other groups. As Robert Dahl has shown, the philosophical imprecision of the argument—both democratic and antidemocratic—reflected its authors' overriding goal: to reconcile conflicting interests and achieve ratification in the upcoming vote of the qualified electors in the states (fewer than 5 percent of the residents). Many pamphlets and articles

were written contemporaneously to refute *The Federalist*, but none attained comparable visibility or political significance. *The Federalist* soon became the definitive story of the Constitution's meanings and their justifications, joining the Declaration and Constitution as the premier documents in American political thought.

A key compromise helping secure ratification of the Constitution was an agreement by the drafters to add a Bill of Rights soon after ratification was achieved. The original Constitution's lack of protection of individuals from the government and potentially tyrannical majorities had concerned Jefferson and his friend and *Federalist* author Madison. Within a few years, rights to free speech, press, and assembly; of religion; to a fair trial; and against cruel and unusual punishments, among others, were added as the first ten amendments to the Constitution, collectively called the Bill of Rights.

Events of the nineteenth century reflected key features of both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. First, the pluralistic diversity protected by the Constitution was soon reflected in the development of an oppositional political party, Jefferson and Madison's Democratic-Republicans, favoring individualism and the states, to compete with the strong-government and nationalist Federalist Party of George Washington, Hamilton, and John Adams. Although George Washington's two terms as president were relatively uncontroversial, his successor, John Adams, alienated many fellow Federalists with the Alien and Sedition Acts, which violated the Bill of Rights by making various forms of opposition to the government illegal. When Democratic-Republican Jefferson was narrowly elected president in 1800, outgoing Federalist John Adams took the opportunity to appoint several Federalists to newly created judgeships and John Marshall, his outgoing Secretary of State, as Chief Justice of the United States. This move effectively passed the role of spokesperson for the Federalist opposition to Marshall.

Second, subsequent events reflected the importance of the judicial provision of the Constitution. A devoted strong-government Federalist and avid admirer of first Secretary of the Treasury Hamilton, Marshall set about to make the Supreme Court, and the judiciary generally, a genuinely co-equal

branch of government. One of his tactics was to rally the justices to support a single position or opinion in disputed cases, so it would appear that all were united in judgment and reasoning—and thus able to speak with a more powerful voice. Another of Marshall's moves was to assert in practice, in the famous 1803 case of *Marbury v. Madison*, the Court's power of judicial review, as had been theoretically claimed by Hamilton in *Federalist* #78. As a result, the Supreme Court, and not the states or the people, would become the final arbiter of contested interpretations of the Constitution.

This reading of the Constitution was highly controversial, raising the issue of the very nature of the union. Was it a continuing contract among the states so that the states were the only proper final authorities, capable both of interpreting the meaning of the Constitution and of seceding from the contract and the union if they so desired? Or was it a completed act of the people, forever unifying the nation and assigning the task of interpreting the Constitution to one institution of the national government, the Supreme Court? Jefferson and Madison always held to the first view, Hamilton and Marshall to the second. In litigation just before the Civil War, Chief Justice Roger Taney tried to apply the rights of states view on behalf of the South's position on slavery, only to be rejected by Abraham Lincoln and Northern armies.

In retrospect, Southerners such as Jefferson and Madison probably had the better of the historical argument, but of course not the moral or practical one. Proslavery Southern thinkers such as John C. Calhoun and George Fitzhugh maintained that black slaves, naturally inferior to whites, enjoyed a better life under benevolent Southern plantation owners than they would have under the dog-eat-dog Northern free market. Indeed, Fitzhugh contrasted the easygoing life style of black slaves with the desperate plight of Northern, legally free "wage slaves," whose employers' concern for them stopped the minute they left work.

By contrast, abolitionists like Benjamin Rush, William Lloyd Garrison, and former slave Frederick Douglass argued that any inferiority of African Americans was attributable to their unequal treatment at the hands of the racist white majority of the times, especially under slavery. No good Christian, these critics claimed, could countenance the brutality and

injustice of treating other human beings as property. Not only Christ, they exclaimed, but also the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights militated against such shameful denials of freedom and equality. The original Constitution—and Madison's *Federalist* #54—had equivocated on the issue of slavery, counting each slave as three-fifths of a person.

As an attempted justification of slavery, judicial review fell into temporary disrepute—not to reappear until the 1880s when the Court gave it new life in defense of corporations, property, and privilege. In the meantime, the Civil War amendments expanded the power of the national government against the states by freeing the slaves, extending the right to vote to African Americans, and ensuring all citizens due process and equal protection of the laws. Thus, the Constitution took on a much clearer and more democratic and national character and scope.

Complicating matters further in the decades surrounding the Civil War, two new ideologies, inspired by the egalitarian values of the Declaration of Independence, were propounded by political movements with a national scope. A feminist movement in the nineteenth century, led by women such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, challenged the patriarchal dominance of men in American government and society. Why, they asked, should the rights guaranteed in the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights not be extended to women as well as men? If the young country was based on freedom, equality, and justice, how could it justify arbitrary inequalities and restrictions of women's liberties? Wasn't this disparity the epitome of injustice?

In the decades prior to the Civil War, a second movement, the Jacksonian Revolution, swept through the states demanding equal political rights for poor white males. Similar to the reasoning of feminists, the Jacksonian argument held that the classic American rights could not justly be withheld on the basis of a person's economic standing. As a matter of political exigency, the controversial issue of who should have the right to vote had been left to the states by the Constitution of 1787, thus depriving most poor white males of the right to vote enjoyed by their wealthier counterparts. Now, male farmers and laborers demanded political equality for themselves, finding success in state after state before the Civil War. Thus, the

Jacksonians challenged the oligarchical balance of U.S. government, a democratic impulse resisted briefly by the probusiness Whig Party before it was replaced after twenty years by ex-Whig Lincoln's new Republican Party in the mid-1850s.

American Political Thought: The Second Century

The second century of American political thought, from the 1870s to the tumultuous 1960s, saw variations on traditional themes of American political thinking rather than original new bodies of thought. These traditional themes encompassed racial and gender conflict, the government's role in resolving socioeconomic conflicts and crises such as the Great Depression, the increasing use of Hamiltonian means to achieve Jeffersonian ends, and revisions of traditional American foreign policy.

With the defeat of the South in 1865, radical Republicans carried out a program of Reconstruction in the South, barring former Southern officials from government while imposing racially egalitarian rule in the Southern states. Succeeding for a decade, the Republicans enfranchised black ex-slaves and enabled many to gain public office. Traditional American democratic-republican theory was thus temporarily applied in the former slave states on a one-person, one-vote basis. When Southern resistance stiffened, national military control enforced the terms by which Southern states could reenter the union and be represented in Congress.

By contrast, a conservative Supreme Court reinterpreted the Civil War amendments to render them ineffectual in protecting the rights of Southern blacks, and life for the newly freed black population began to resemble that of pre-Civil War days. By the time of the disputed presidential election of 1876, most Americans had tired of the struggle to support black rights and acquiesced in another North-South compromise, this time to give electoral ballots to the Republicans, who in turn agreed to withdraw federal troops from the Southern states. Thus, the narrow victory of Republican Rutherford B. Hayes over Democrat Samuel Tilden came at a high price for Southern blacks, denying their achievement of equal rights for a full century.

While black achievement of the American dream of freedom, equality, and prosperity was forestalled, black political thinkers of the early twentieth century achieved important milestones that eventually bore fruit in the Civil Rights and Black Power movements of the second half of the twentieth century. Educator Booker T. Washington, founder of the Tuskegee Institute, urged blacks to progress economically, by means of basic education and hard work, without threatening whites by demanding equal political or social rights. In *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), Harvard-educated intellectual W. E. B. Du Bois took issue with Booker T. Washington, arguing that African Americans would never overcome the inherited disadvantages of slavery without demanding political rights, equal access to public facilities, and higher education. Du Bois connected the personal with the political, explaining why blacks' effective pursuit of happiness and political empowerment required them to overcome their own feelings of inferiority. Harlem Renaissance poet Langston Hughes picked up on these themes in politically charged poems such as "A New Song," "Let America Be America Again," and especially, the foreboding "Harlem, or Dream Deferred." Hughes later inspired both civil-rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. and the Black Power movement.

Similarly, the first-wave feminist movement of the nineteenth century did not achieve women's national right to vote until the Nineteenth Amendment was passed in 1920. Anarchist feminist Emma Goldman warned in 1910 that legal rights to work and vote were only part of the battle for women's equality. Her emphasis on women's psychological and cultural liberation presaged later waves of feminism in the late twentieth century. Still, the right to vote has made a difference. As poor white men, people of color, women, and eighteen-year-olds successively won the franchise, U.S. government came to represent more than just the white male property owners who wrote the Constitution. This broader-based, more democratic government became a less consistent supporter of the status quo and thus, in the twentieth century, became less popular with conservatives and more popular with reform-oriented liberals.

The rapidly expanding industrial economy of the United States in the late nineteenth century raised new issues for American political thinkers and policy makers confronted with corporate robber barons, increasing labor

strife, and boom-and-bust cycles of unregulated capitalism, culminating in the Great Depression of the 1930s. Franklin and Jefferson had warned of the political dangers of powerful corporations, “which might challenge our government to a trial of strength and bid defiance to the laws of our country,” as Jefferson put it in a November 12, 1816, letter to George Logan. Before and after the turn of the century, the ideas of the pro-farmer and/ or labor Populist Party, unionists, the Progressive movement, and socialist novelist Edward Bellamy challenged the status quo, while the federal government, contrariwise, diverted troops from enforcing Reconstruction in the South to breaking strikes in Northern cities.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court steadfastly supported the status quo by first holding that corporations were persons for the purpose of asserting their rights under the Constitution and then adding new rights requiring that legislative regulations applying to the uses of corporate property be reasonable in the eyes of the Court. Presidents William McKinley (1897–1901) and William Howard Taft (1909–13) favored the corporations, while Presidents Theodore Roosevelt (1901–09) and Woodrow Wilson (1913–21) railed against them. Industrialists such as John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie (1889)—the world’s two richest people—argued that private philanthropy, not governmental intervention, was the key to ensuring that great accumulations of wealth served the public good.

Also promoting ideological support for the status quo was the Social Darwinism of thinkers such as Yale-educated William Graham Sumner, whose 1884 book *What Social Classes Owe to Each Other* answered its own question with a resounding “nothing.” In short, life is a struggle in which some survive and thrive but others falter or die. The government, according to Social Darwinists, should not intervene to tax the successful in order to aid the needy. Its role, rather, was to maintain a fair competition and prevent political oppression of one group by another. This rather hard-hearted approach, they claimed, would in the long run promote the survival of the fittest and lead to improvement in the human race.

These disputes over the proper uses of power and wealth engaged two longstanding threads of American political thought: the Jeffersonian fear of excessive corporate and governmental power and the Hamiltonian

commitment to business and a strong and business-friendly national government to promote the economic development of the United States. Theodore Roosevelt's primary idea man, Harvard-educated theorist Herbert Croly, published in 1909 *The Promise of American Life* to reconcile these two competing bodies of thought and practice. Croly essentially argued that the treasured Jeffersonian goals of individual rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness required government to create the conditions under which these goals could be achieved. Large corporations could not be allowed to run roughshod over the American people, but neither should government get in the way of the economic incentives necessary to ensure that businesses would pursue reasonable profits as responsible corporate citizens. The national government must ensure a proper balance between free markets and national economic health.

Croly's theoretical synthesis of Jefferson and Hamilton was carried to its logical conclusion by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in his efforts to combat the Great Depression of the 1930s. Aided by economic advisors influenced by economist John Maynard Keynes, Franklin Roosevelt greatly expanded the fiscal and monetary role of government in a large array of new public programs collectively known as the New Deal. In addition to providing a stimulus to and increased public regulation of the depressed economy, the New Deal became the employer of last resort in such public programs as the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Works Progress Administration. From the early 1930s on, never again would the government of the United States embrace the laissez-faire philosophy of unregulated, free-market capitalism. In American political thought and practice, the public good had become a public responsibility.

American thinking about foreign policy had traditionally been guided by two factors. The first was the reality of American expansionism, including the taking of land from indigenous Americans as well as overseas conquests in the Pacific (e.g., the Philippines) and in the Caribbean (e.g., Puerto Rico). This policy, called imperialistic by such critics as Henry David Thoreau in 1848 and later and at the turn of the century by Mark Twain, was justified by the ideology of Manifest Destiny, a term coined in the 1845 work *Annexation* by entrepreneurial journalist and lobbyist Jane Cazneau, urging U.S. annexation of Mexico.

The second major influence was the famous warning of President George Washington in his Farewell Address of 1796 that the United States should avoid all unnecessary foreign entanglements. In general, we would fare best by tending to our own affairs, he advised. This second tradition was evident in the widespread resistance to the United States' entry into World War II, overcome only by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Later, American isolationism was reversed by the Cold War that began between erstwhile allies the United States and the Soviet Union after World War II. Americans' perceived threat of global communism led to a U.S. policy of forward containment, conceived by diplomat George F. Kennan to prevent the Soviet Bloc from extending its sphere of influence and communist ideology beyond Eastern and Central Europe.

Post–World War II Americans came to think of their country as the world's policeman, especially after the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1990. This initially defensive posture later took on a more offensive character under the influence of neoconservative ideologists such as Paul Wolfowitz. It accelerated in the wake of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States and culminated in the U.S. preventive invasion of Iraq in 2003.

New Voices in American Political Thought Since the 1960s

Croly's early twentieth-century synthesis of Jeffersonian individualism and Hamiltonian statism appealed to both Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives, for much of the twentieth century but came unraveled beginning in the 1960s. No one or two American political theories any longer dominate most Americans' political thinking. But which of a bewildering array of new bodies of thought have captured a large enough audience for a long enough period of time to be reasonably considered contenders for lasting influence?

As in the past, Americans' recent political thinking germinated from real-life events and conditions. The 1960s sowed many seeds of change in American political thought and practice, including landmark civil-rights

legislation, the Vietnam War and opposition to it, women's renewed struggle for equal rights, hippie cultural radicalism, accelerating environmental crises, and efforts of ethnic minorities and homosexuals to find their voices and places in American politics and society. Shaped by these factors, and based on their track records over the past several decades, two old ideologies seem to have lost their coherence while three new modes of American political thought have emerged and flourished.

Conservatism and Liberalism: Compatriots in Incoherence?

The classical conservatism of Leo Strauss, with its dim view of human nature and call for strong government to curtail dangerous human impulses, has always struggled to compete with classical liberalism's more positive view and advocacy of limited government. More generically, conservatism by definition seeks to preserve the status quo, but the long-term trajectory of American politics has always been progress, reform, and change. Thus for more than two centuries, what U.S. conservatives have sought to preserve has been an ever shifting target. Conservatism's lack of consistent, long-term objectives has never been clearer than in the early twenty-first century.

U.S. conservatives—and the Republican Party—are divided among libertarians (including tea party advocates as well as quasi-anarchist philosopher Robert Nozick) who, like classical liberals, oppose big government; a corporate faction focused on business profits; the Christian Right, promoting social values like the sanctity of heterosexual marriage and opposition to abortion and trash culture; a law-and-order group notable for its opposition to illegal immigrants; and neoconservatives promoting the extension of American-style democratic capitalism around the world. Despite some overlapping interests, these conservative factions have many conflicting goals, especially regarding the proper role of government in the economy and private lives of citizens and regarding U.S. foreign policy.

Twenty-first-century U.S. liberals seem, if anything, even more divided than U.S. conservatives, with Democrats exhibiting even more dramatically

than Republicans the contradictions inherent in what Theodore Lowi has called interest group liberalism. Does justice require a chicken in every pot, with strong labor unions and guaranteed jobs for all? Or does it require special help, through affirmative action, for those—such as women and people of color—who continue to suffer the adverse effects of historical discrimination? But perhaps the concerns of humans, who have devastated the planet, should be subordinated to the ecological needs of all living things. The government cannot afford to do everything, so should U.S. foreign policy expend trillions to help the oppressed peoples of Iraq and Afghanistan, especially women and children, or should it retreat to isolationism? The Democratic Party seeks to represent dozens of progressive groups, but when these groups' interests conflict, Democrats appear, in Lowi's terms, to define justice by default as whatever is the outcome of the competition of interest groups—epitomizing cynic Ambrose Bierce's 1911 definition of politics as “a strife of interests masquerading as a contest of principles.”

In *A Theory of Justice* (1971), influential liberal theorist John Rawls tried to rise above special interests and reconcile the competing claims of liberty and equality, arguing in part that only those inequalities beneficial to the worst-off citizens were permissible. But a generation later, in *Political Liberalism* (1996), Rawls conceded that his formula for justice would not work in large, modern, multicultural societies such as the United States.

Beyond Liberalism and Conservatism: New American Political Thinking

Three important new bodies of American political thought have emerged since the 1960s to establish themselves as both formidable challengers to traditional thinking and as contenders for a permanent place in the pantheon of American ideologies: multiculturalism, ecology, and youth empowerment.

Multiculturalism

Beginning in the 1960s, white, Eurocentric, patriarchal ideologies came under increasing fire from American feminists and multiculturalists. Rooted in the traditional American value of equality, multiculturalism asserts the equal rights of women, people of color, religious minorities, and homosexuals. Just as nineteenth-century first-wave feminists asked why women should not equally enjoy the rights emblazoned in the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights, second- and third-wave feminists have more recently challenged the political, economic, and cultural dominance of Christian, white, heterosexual males.

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s sought to fulfill the centuries-old aspirations of African Americans for the full freedom, equality, and justice enjoyed by white Americans. Black, brown, and red power movements soon grew out of the impatience of African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans with the slowness of racial progress, reflecting the civil disobedience of Martin Luther King Jr. Betty Friedan's 1963 book *The Feminine Mystique* triggered the second-wave feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s, decrying culturally reinforced limitations on the choices and lifestyles of American women. Starting with the Stonewall riots of 1969 in Greenwich Village, gays and lesbians began to be more open about their sexuality and demanded an end to discrimination against homosexuals.

Despite political differences and conflicts within and among these groups—Susan Moller Okin asks *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* (1999)—they share the common experience of suffering unequal treatment at the hands of historically privileged groups and officials. Many multiculturalists, including African American lesbian poet June Jordan, have placed their own disadvantages in a larger context and urged their followers to unite, even with sympathetic heterosexual white males, around the common cause of equal treatment and social justice. Much evidence, including opinion polls and the political careers of Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, indicates that the attitudes of Americans have shifted significantly in favor of these groups' pleas for equal treatment.

Ecology

Since the 1960s, environmental scientists and activists have offered a startling critique of American, and indeed Western, civilization: namely, that its economic system of mass production and culture of consumption are spiritually debilitating and physically unsustainable. Inspired by pioneering environmentalists Aldo Leopold and Rachel Carson, the ecology movement not only has gained traction over the decades but also has, according to opinion polls, captured the support of most Americans for using public policy to protect the environment and for changing their own lifestyles in environmentally friendlier directions. The increasingly serious problem of climate change has accelerated the ecological cause in the United States and around the world. By the first decade of the twenty-first century, environmental groups were waging successful campaigns against business, labor, and consumerist interests in pressing governments to take action to prevent global warming and environmental catastrophes such as the massive oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010.

Youth Empowerment

The youngest of these new contenders is the ideology of youth rights and empowerment. In the 1970s, adult pioneers of youth voice and rights such as Richard Farson and John Holt began arguing that many young people had political preferences and that their preferences should count. Beginning in the 1990s, youth activists such as Craig and Marc Kielburger started taking up their own cause in the process challenging the exclusively adultist regime of power and authority. The Kielburgers helped found Free the Children, a child-run international human-rights organization focused on freeing indentured child laborers. The National Youth Rights Alliance began advocating for a wide range of youth rights by providing mechanisms for youth political participation and by opposing discrimination against the young as reflected in corporal punishment (legalized assault), censorship of school newspapers, dress codes, youth curfews, and youth disenfranchisement.

The political theory underlying children's rights and empowerment holds that under democracy, all citizens affected by public policy have the right to a voice in shaping it and holding leaders accountable. Arguments that minors are ignorant, irrational, or immature, youth advocates maintain, are

arbitrary and aristocratic rather than rational and democratic because they are not applied to the millions of ignorant, irrational, and immature American adults. These youth partisans provide telling examples of highly informed and articulate political activists under the age of eighteen.

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See also [Conservatism](#); [Constitutionalism](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Liberalism](#)

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Anarchism

Anarchism

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Anarchism

Anarchism is a worldwide movement that has its ideological origins in the French Revolution, though the principles that inspire the political ideology are frequently identified in a range of earlier and not exclusively European schools of thought. Anarchism also describes a way of thinking or a set of attitudes, linking political movements narrowly understood, to creative currents in literature, science, the arts and humanities. Pierre-Joseph Proudhon was the first writer to use the term *anarchy* to describe his political ideal, knowing that it was already associated with chaos, social disorder, and violence. Anarchists have had cause to regret his decision ever since because for them, anarchy conjures images of precisely the opposite conditions; the familiar graffiti that places the A inside the O symbolizes the integral relationship they identify in anarchy and order.

One of the hallmarks of anarchism is the celebration of diversity and the reluctance on the part of many (though not all) to define its theoretical principles. Anarchists tend to be resistant to the idea that anarchism might be attached to one concept or ideal (e.g., the priority of liberty, classlessness), and their reluctance has encouraged a proliferation of labels within the movement. It is not unusual to find reference in anarchist literatures to social anarchism, anarcho-communism, anarcho-syndicalism, class-struggle anarchism, or anarcho-feminism, and sometimes more contentious forms such as market-anarchism or anarcho-capitalism. The ideological parameters of these different forms, their interrelationship and the definitional role that any might claim to have had in the construction of

the anarchist tradition, still generate considerable debate. In contemporary anarchism, these debates have been deepened by the appearance of two further currents. The first draws on poststructuralist thought to question anarchism's philosophical underpinnings and produce a new hybrid, postanarchism. The second instead focuses on the constraints of ideology and rejects anarchism in favor of post-left anarchy. Interestingly, since his relationship to anarchism is much disputed, Max Stirner has been identified as an influence on both.

The reluctance to identify anarchism with any particular political principle perhaps reflects deeply rooted historical suspicions about the theoretical implications of revolutionary Marxism, specifically, the idea that liberation might be reduced to a single goal: the abolition of individual ownership of the means of production. The claim that Michael Bakunin made against Marx in the course of their battles in the First International (1870–71) was that this formulation ignored other equally invidious forms of oppression rooted in religion, patriarchy, and concepts of race. In the other part, there is a particular concern about the association of anarchism with antistatism. This concern has a number of dimensions. One aspect is the fear that antistatism fails to provide a clear marker between socialist and right-libertarian currents of thought. Another key concern is that the principle wrongly focuses attention on institutional structures rather than on social relationships. The combined influence of the peace and ecology movements, of antiracist, feminist, and gay struggles on contemporary anarchist thought, particularly since 1968, has helped reorder this assumed priority. Gustav Landauer's conception of the state as a set of social relations, which can be effectively challenged by behavioral change, resonates in much modern anarchist writing, though Landauer's relationship to the anarchist movements in which he was involved is less well understood. Nevertheless, the idea that anarchism involves the rejection of the state is not only historically defensible, but also it provides a starting point for the discussion of anarchist ideas that is neither inherently reductive nor structurally biased.

The Rejection of the State

Anarchists have understood the state in different ways, but three approaches are recurrent in anarchist literatures. In the first, the state is understood sociologically, as a feature of the modern world linked to the centralization of political power, bureaucratization, and especially in Proudhon's work, the development of the international system. In the second, the state is associated with concepts of sovereignty, authority, and political obligation. The third approach is functional and defines the state as a system of domination, based on institutionalization of social, economic, and political inequalities. These different approaches are not mutually exclusive: the nineteenth-century anarchist Peter A. Kropotkin understood the state in all of these ways. Tracing its origins to the late Middle Ages in Europe, he argued that states were defined by the principle of government by command that infantilized, atomized, and brutalized individuals and that its purpose was to uphold the privileges of military, religious, and political elites. However, the weight that different anarchists attach to these aspects of the state affects both their critical assessments of it and their strategies for change. For example, the concern about the process of state formation maps to a general interest in institutional alternatives and a preference for decentralized federation, made manifest in particular experiments of syndicalist design, affinity group organization, and informal grassroots networking. The priority variously attached to independent judgment and acting in accordance with conscience has similarly promoted a range of practices and behaviors, from voluntary cooperation through mutual aid, consensus decision making, and the development of alternative pedagogies, to civil disobedience, direct action, and the creative transgression of moral norms. The critique of the state's function as the guarantor of minority interests also runs through anarchist writings. Anarchists have fundamental disagreements about the ways in which the inequalities of the state might best be tackled and vehemently dispute the role of markets and the status of private property in anarchy. Nevertheless, challenges to the state's function have inspired schemes for cooperative production, mutual exchange, and gift economies. The challenge has also been felt in *glocalism* (a term coined by Kropotkin's friend, Patrick Geddes) and in very different proposals for the integration of agriculture and industry, large-scale collectivization, and recently, the wholesale rejection of technology.

As critics of the state, anarchists have traditionally been identified within socialist circles by their rejection of parliamentarism, proletarian dictatorship, and the revolutionary vanguard. Historically, they always argued that it was impossible to disassociate the ends of revolutionary struggle from the means and that the seizure of power by an elite representative group, however temporary in or outside parliaments, will necessarily result in a transfer of power within the state rather than its abolition. The relationship between the ends and means of struggle is now captured in the idea of prefiguration, though there is some debate about the extent to which these ideas are actually synonymous. In the post–World War II period, some anarchists have insisted on a strong relationship to argue that prefigurative politics is necessarily nonviolent. Others have asserted a similarly strong link but instead justified revolutionary violence. Yet others, including postanarchists and adherents of post–left anarchy, have suggested a weaker relationship and argued that prefiguration describes a qualitatively different form of politics, not just the rejection of means-ends distinctions. This distinction, they argue, remains open to a naive utopianism: the notion of revolutionary change as a moment of transition, leading from the old world to the new, the recovery of natural behaviors, and to life lived happily and harmoniously ever after. In contrast, prefiguration is about dynamic process, the embrace of contestation, incommensurable difference, and plurality. Yet however the relationship is treated, there is general agreement that prefiguration captures a distinctively anarchist desire to initiate change in the present and through grassroots activity in everyday life. The degrees to which individuals and groups can cooperate, resolve, or ignore their differences and take control of their own affairs and arrangements is widely held to be an expression of anarchy in action or do-it-yourself politics and part of a process of continuous change, development, and resistance.

Clarifying Concepts

While anarchist antistatism has importantly shaped ideas about change, it has also presented problems for the analysis of anarchist ideas. Anarchism, as Rudolf Rocker famously claimed, is sometimes said to borrow from both liberal and socialist traditions. Yet anarchists tend to diverge from mainstream liberal traditions just as they do from dominant Marxist

currents of socialist thought. This divergence presents particular challenges in theory and sometimes results in seeming contradictions in anarchist thinking. For example, Bakunin both declared himself a fanatical lover of liberty and denied the possibility of achieving absolute liberty. In some cases, the confusion is easily explained. Bakunin qualified his rejection of authority as command by distinguishing it from a conception of authority as advice: being in authority was not the same as being an authority. In others, the problem is more difficult to resolve. When it comes to liberty, some analysts have attempted to interrogate the anarchist conception through the lens of positive and negative freedom. The results are often unsatisfactory because both constructions assume the very condition that the anarchist wants to reject: the state. Conceptions of individual–community relations are dogged by a similar problem. Although anarchists share liberal concerns about individuality, their theoretical paradigms are not typically shaped by an idea of necessary limits to freedom but by concepts of solidarity, cooperation, or in the case of Stirnerite egoists, unity. Anarchist writers have certainly engaged with other philosophical traditions but have tended to develop critical frameworks of their own. The contrast is probably most apparent in international relations theory, where anarchists take issue with the central concept of international anarchy.

Understanding anarchist thought consequently demands a particular sensitivity to context and the languages of debate. It also requires sensitivity to the ways in which anarchists have typically engaged in political argument. In the history of ideas and in studies of political ideology, anarchism has come to be identified with a canon. Unsurprisingly, the membership is open to debate: Proudhon, Bakunin, and Kropotkin are regularly identified as central figures within it; Benjamin Tucker, Leo Tolstoy, and Stirner feature intermittently as does William Godwin. Of the twentieth-century contributors, Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman, and Nestor Makhno loom large, and from the post–World War II generation, Murray Bookchin, Colin Ward, Paul Goodman, and Alex Comfort are among the most celebrated. Today, the works of Noam Chomsky, John Zerzan, Hakim Bey, and Cindy Milstein are likely to appear on many anarchist reading lists. But questions of inclusion and exclusion are not so burning an issue in anarchist discussions of anarchist traditions as the primary division between theory and practice that the construction of the

canon implies. Ironically, since most of the key writers who feature in the canon were (and are) themselves activists, this concern can seem misplaced. Nevertheless, the point that most anarchist writers would wish to make about anarchism is that it cannot be understood solely through the work of its scholarly, philosophical exponents; that the languages of debate are those of activists not academics; and that to assess the former by the standards of the latter is to misunderstand and risk misrepresenting anarchist ideas.

The antitheoretical bias of anarchism is sometimes badly overstated. Anarchism's apparently parasitical relationship to Marxism and the claim that anarchists have served as the passionate heart to the Marxists' rational head is one unfortunate result. However, the bias begs legitimate questions about anarchism's contribution to political thought. First is the distinctive critique of the state: the reminder that the modern state is just one possible and very recent system of political organization—that its failings to tackle injustice and degradation are design faults not merely the result of governmental abuse or corruption. Second is the richness of the anarchist's political vision, the utopian commitment to alternative ways of being, and the practical concern to encourage creative experimentation in ethics and social life. Third is the desire to articulate and disseminate these ideas as common sense in ways that can be realized by ordinary people.

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See also [Bakunin, Michael](#); [Goldman, Emma](#); [Kropotkin, Peter A.](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Proudhon, Pierre-Joseph](#); [Stirner, Max](#)

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Animal Rights

Animal rights

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Animal Rights

The idea of according rights to animals dates to at least the eighteenth century, but only since the 1970s has it become an important branch of applied ethics. This growing academic interest was accompanied—in Britain, Europe, and the United States in particular—by the emergence of an animal rights movement that has now become an established part of the social movement scene. There is now a considerable body of legislation regulating the treatment of animals, and the ways in which humans treat them—as experimental subjects and sources of food in particular—often provoke heated public debate. Moreover, the tactics of some animal rights activists has raised questions of public order and the legitimacy of direct action.

The debate about animal rights, however, has been largely neglected by political theorists most of whom, while accepting that we owe some moral obligations to animals, reject the idea that their moral status is such that it makes sense to use the language of rights in their defense. As a result, political theorists have not, by and large, engaged in a discussion about the impact the moral consideration of animals might have on political concepts such as justice, freedom, and democracy.

History

Legislation regulating the use of animals has existed since the nineteenth century. Although this legislation challenged the previously dominant view that we owed no direct moral obligations to animals, what it does not do is to challenge the widespread perception that they have an inferior moral status to humans. There were nineteenth-century challenges to this position, the work of the Victorian thinker and activist Henry Salt being the most notable example. It was not until the latter quarter of the twentieth century, however, that—under the guise of animal rights—the claim of the moral inferiority of animals came under sustained scrutiny. Indeed, academic philosophers have written more on animal rights in the last thirty years or so than in the previous 250 years.

The intellectual origins of the animal rights movement have a distinct Oxford connection. In 1972, three Oxford philosophers—Roslind and Stanley Godlovitch and John Harris—edited a set of articles published as *Animals, Men and Morals*. Peter Singer (an Oxford-educated Australian academic) reviewed this volume in the *New York Review of Books*, and this review formed the basis of his own *Animal Liberation* published in the mid-1970s. As we shall see, Singer bases his case for an elevated moral status for animals on utilitarian grounds. Others sought to articulate a case for treating animals, along with humans, as beings who are holders of rights, including Richard Ryder, Andrew Linzey, and Stephen Clark (all with Oxford connections) as well as the American philosopher Tom Regan whose lengthy and sophisticated book *The Case for Animal Rights*, published in 1984, has earned him a formidable reputation within the animal rights movement and beyond. Since the 1980s, a second generation of animal ethicists has emerged, some who have built upon previous themes while others have taken animal rights in different directions.

Humans, Animals, and Moral Status

According rights to animals necessitates establishing that they have a moral status that is on a par, at least in some respects, with humans. Until the nineteenth century, it was common in theory and practice to regard animals as having no moral standing whatsoever so that we owed no moral obligations to them directly. By the end of the nineteenth century, it was accepted widely that animals are sentient, having the capacity to experience

pleasure and pain, and that we owe at least something to them directly. This insight led to the establishment of the concept of animal welfare that now constitutes the moral orthodoxy, at least in the developed world. Its central feature is an insistence that humans are morally superior to animals but that since animals have some moral worth, we are not entitled to inflict suffering on them if the human benefit thereby resulting is not necessary. Sacrificing the interests of animals for the aggregative welfare, then, is permissible providing that the benefit is significant enough, but treating humans in the same way is prohibited whatever the benefits that might accrue from so doing.

Philosophers advocating animal rights, broadly construed, have sought to challenge the animal welfare ethic. Animal welfare is based upon demonstrating that humans are different from animals in morally significant ways. In particular, it is argued that humans possess a collection of mental characteristics—autonomy, memory, a language, and agency—that together constitutes personhood. Persons, it is said, can be harmed in much more fundamental ways than nonpersons and have lives that are qualitatively more worthwhile. As a result, it is morally permissible to sacrifice the interests animals have in not suffering in order to defend the much more profound interests humans have.

Philosophers advocating animal rights have three major responses to the personhood argument. First, it has been suggested that at least some animals do possess elements of personhood. In response to this claim, defenders of the moral orthodoxy have argued that even the most intellectually able animals do not have the characteristics of personhood to the same degree as the average normal adult human. As a result, animals will always lose out in a direct application of the personhood argument, if the personhood argument is applied without any further adaptation.

One such adaptation provides the second response to the personhood argument: the assertion that not all humans are persons. Thus, in the so-called argument from marginal cases, it is asked if we persist in justifying the exploitation of animals on the grounds that they are cognitively less able than humans, then what should we do with those humans—the seriously mentally disabled in particular—who do not themselves have the

characteristics of personhood? Consistency would seem to demand that we either exploit human mental defectives as well as animals or we exploit neither animals nor marginal humans. The argument from marginal cases has produced a burgeoning literature, by no means a majority supportive of the position, but without a decisive blow being made against it.

The third response to the personhood argument is the claim that the mere fact that animals are sentient ought to result in animals being accorded a higher moral status than the animal welfare ethic allows. In other words, even if we accept that humans are persons and animals are not, it does not follow that the same inequality between humans and animals applies to the issue of sentience. Considering human and animal interests in not suffering equally, it is argued, would have important implications for the way that the latter are currently treated.

Rights and Moral Status

Establishing that animals have a moral status that is higher than the orthodox welfare position allows is a necessary condition for the application of rights to animals. It is not, however, sufficient. For there are those who would agree that animals are worthy of a high moral status but that the concept of rights is not the best way of theorizing this elevated moral status for them. Two alternative approaches are particularly worth mentioning.

First, there is the utilitarian approach associated in particular with Singer. He suggests that we ought to treat like interests alike (the equal consideration of interests), and since at least some animals are sentient, it is morally illegitimate to always prioritize human interests in not suffering. To determine how we should act in any particular situation, Singer argues, we should engage in a cost-benefit analysis, weighing up the satisfying of preferences or interests involved.

Some have argued that Singer's position is a version of animal welfare and therefore lacks the radicalism of animal rights. It is true that Singer, all things being equal, does seem to regard animal life as less important morally than human life. As we shall see below, however, many advocates

of animal rights share this perception. The key point here is that Singer, as a utilitarian, does not attach rights to either humans or animals. Rather, a morally correct action is one that maximizes pleasures or preferences. For Singer, though, to prioritize human interests in the way that the animal welfare ethic does is speciesist because it is basing moral superiority on species membership rather than on a morally relevant characteristic. That is, present practices have an in-built assumption that nontrivial human interests are not to be counted as part of the utilitarian calculation but merely defended whatever the cost to animals.

Singer argues that most current uses of animals—including their use as experimental subjects and as sources of food—are not justified on utilitarian grounds. His work is not immune, however, from the general criticism of utilitarianism's aggregative principle. For example, the aggregative character of utilitarianism makes it debatable, to say the least, whether vegetarianism can be justified on utilitarian grounds. Such a justification would require the balancing of pains and pleasures or preference satisfactions and therefore meat eating is not ruled out of court as it is if we grant to animals a right to life. Indeed, it is possible to provide an imposing list of the consequences of an end to animal agriculture—from the direct loss of jobs in the farming and food industries to incidental effects in a number of other industries—that have to be weighed against the suffering inflicted on animals.

The second challenge to the rights approach to animal ethics comes from feminism. Feminist advocates for animals argue that an approach based on care is a more effective way of protecting animals than one based on traditional rights, or indeed utilitarian, theories of justice. Advocates of a care ethic criticize justice-based animal ethics (as exemplified by those such as Regan and Singer) for its reliance on arguments based upon rationality, logical consistency, universality, fairness and competitive adversarial relationships, and its apparent eschewing of emotion. Instead, this discourse should be replaced, it is argued, by a care ethic that privileges essentially female values such as compassion, empathy, sympathy, and context.

The care-based critique of justice is problematic on a number of levels. Not only does it exaggerate the dichotomy between rationalism, on the one

hand, and emotion or sentiency, on the other, but it also provides little guide as to how we would universalize an individual experience (of, for example, the treatment of animals in a slaughterhouse) to appeal to those who have not had that particular experience. Moreover, there is a lack of empirical evidence for the claim, made by advocates of a care ethic, that there is a close link between sympathy and compassion and a tendency to act upon animal suffering.

As well as the debate between advocates of rights and alternative approaches, rights advocates themselves disagree over what constitutes the basis for according rights to animals. Some suggest that rights can be granted to animals merely on the grounds that they are sentient. Others argue that it is the cognitive capacities of animals that are the key to their status as rights holders. For example, Regan, as an exponent of the latter, seeks to show that at least some animals are what he calls subjects-of-a-life, possessing enough mental complexity to be morally considerable. Because at least some animals have these capabilities, Regan argues, they have a welfare that is capable of being harmed by not only inflictions of pain and deprivation, but also death since it forecloses all possibilities of finding satisfaction in life.

In order to circumvent the apparently subjective nature of rights' claims, Mark Rowlands seeks to develop a contractarian account. Here, the rights of animals are derived, supposedly objectively, from the incorporation of their interests into a Rawlsian social contract. This approach, while ingenious, falls down to some extent because John Rawls derives principles of justice not only from what he argues individuals would choose in the original position behind a veil of ignorance but also from his interpretation of moral intuition.

What Rights?

Some of the most interesting contemporary work on animal rights has focused more specifically on the content of the rights animals can be said to possess. Answers to these questions, in turn, have crucial consequences for what it is legitimate morally to do to animals. The debate has focused on

whether or not animals can be said to possess a right to life and a right to freedom.

In terms of the former, there is a consensus among proanimal philosophers that human life is more valuable than animal life. Even Regan, who does attach a right to life to mammals over the age of one, claims that in the event of a choice between saving the life of a human and the life of an animal, the human would normally win out. The reason for the greater value placed on human life relates to the harm caused by death, either in terms of denying a desire to stay alive or in terms of the loss of opportunities that death will foreclose. In both cases, it is widely argued, the loss to humans is greater because we possess the characteristics of personhood.

The insight about the respective value of human and animal lives raises a question mark against according to animals a right to life. Similar arguments might be used to deny animals a right to liberty. One interpretation, suggested by Alasdair Cochrane, would be that because humans are autonomous, liberty is intrinsically valuable to us. That is, it is valuable irrespective of the benefits—such as avoidance of frustration—that derive from it. For animals, on the other hand, liberty is valuable precisely because of the goods deriving from it. As a result, liberty is a means to the end of the achievement of other goals, whereas for humans it is intrinsically valuable. Liberty may therefore be beneficial to animals but only when it has, say, the effect of alleviating suffering.

It is a commonplace to assume that the animal rights position is opposed to the use of animals because to use animals is to deprive them of liberty and more often than not, life. It is for this reason that the condition of animals is often equated in the animal rights literature with human slavery. It is for this reason too that animal rights is held by some to be inconsistent with their ownership by humans. Thus, only when animals are liberated from human use can the rights position be achieved. This argument does not apply, however, if it is contended that animals do not possess a right to life or liberty. The effect here is to focus attention on the treatment of animals and not their use per se. It raises the possibility that it is morally wrong to

infringe an animal's right not to suffer but morally legitimate still to use them and even kill them, providing it is done painlessly.

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See also [Rights](#), [Natural and Human](#)

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Apartheid

Apartheid

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Apartheid

South Africa was governed according to the ideology of apartheid (apartness) from 1948 to 1993. Apartheid's roots lie in the Boer War between the United Kingdom and Afrikaners (descendants of Dutch settlers in present-day South Africa). British-led modernization after their victory saw Afrikaners urbanized. In the cities, they encountered poverty and Anglo-racism. Further, Britain's Governor-General, Alfred Milner, tried to Anglicize Afrikaners. Backlashes against Anglicization and poverty produced Afrikaner nationalism, which named itself Christian nationalism. These antiimperialist nationalists wanted to replace British rule with an Afrikaner republic. During the 1930s and 1940s, intellectuals concerned about growing Afrikaner poverty formulated the apartheid idea. These intellectuals were Daniel Malan, P. J. Meyer, Hendrik Verwoerd, Werner Eiselen, Nic Olivier, Geoffrey Cronje, Nico Diederichs, E. G. Jansen, Barney van Eeden, P. J. Schoeman, P. J. Coertze, and F. J. Language.

Diederichs laid the theoretical foundations of Christian nationalism—an idea infused with the Dutch *verzuiling* (pillarization) logic of Calvinist theologian Abraham Kuyper. Diederichs argued nations had a God-ordained right to exist as separate entities. Hence, Afrikaners had the right to exist as a separate nation, refuse Anglo-assimilation, and refuse a British-designed South Africa that lumped Afrikaners (as a minority) in with other ethnic groups. Cronje added the idea that Afrikaners needed to build their own cultural-political space separate from Anglos, blacks, coloreds, and Indians. He argued the alternative to own-ness (*eiesoortigheid*) was that Afrikaans

culture would be swamped by a combination of Anglo cultural imperialism and huge numbers of black migrants being imported by Anglo-capitalists (whose profit drive threw people together “who did not belong together”). The solution was deemed to be apartheid—the political partition of South Africa into separate ethnically defined states, which facilitated Afrikaners becoming a demographic majority within their own independent state. From this grew the National Party (NP), geared to implement partition and deconstruct the British-made South African state. The NP saw apartheid as an alternative to the following:

A unified multiracial state governed by white supremacy and segregation, favored by Jan Smut’s United Party.

A unified state governed by universal suffrage, favored by the African National Congress (ANC).

Three Phases of Apartheid

From 1948 to 1957, the NP emphasized the establishment of Afrikaner sovereignty plus the creation of own-ness and own cultural spaces through the following:

Own-language education. Separate English and Afrikaner schools, colleges, and universities were established. Nine black languages were codified and used in a newly established black education system (Bantu Education).

Legally defining ethnic population groups to create the basis for partition.

Clearing multiracial slums and moving inhabitants into separate black, colored, Indian, and white townships.

Deploying affirmative action to upgrade poor Afrikaners.

From 1958 to 1977, apartheid’s social engineers implemented a program of internal decolonization (called separate development) involving the following:

Establishing nine self-governing black states called homelands (Bantustans).

Blacks becoming citizens of these homelands, losing their South African citizenship when homelands were granted independence. Blacks were granted political rights in the homelands and refused political rights in white South Africa.

A migration control system (pass laws) forcibly removing many blacks from white South Africa to homelands (to achieve an Afrikaner demographic majority in the white Republic).

Reducing economic integration between whites and blacks by relocating industrial zones to homeland border areas.

Separate development (political partition) was called grand apartheid to differentiate it from petty apartheid (segregation).

From 1978 to 1993, the idea of full political partition was abandoned as unimplementable and replaced with Arend Lijphart's consociational model, involving a (multirace, three chamber) Tricameral Parliament and Constellation of States. The tricameral reforms generated a sustained revolt (led by the United Democratic Front), which militarized the apartheid state and produced an era of political violence that brought about apartheid's downfall.

Five Interpretations of Apartheid

Because of the difficulties of explaining the complexities of apartheid policies to non-South Africans, apartheid is often understood in simplistic and reductionist terms. However, because it was opposed by both liberals and socialists (for different reasons), apartheid became widely reviled and routinely condemned, although there is no common agreement as to what apartheid was or why it was bad. A reading of all the literature on apartheid reveals five broad interpretations:

1. Apartheid equals segregation. A view common in the United States where apartheid is equated with segregation in U.S. southern states.
2. In 1973, the United Nations General Assembly declared apartheid a (racist) crime against humanity. This resolution was supported by the Soviet bloc and Afro-Asian bloc but not ratified by West European states, the United States, and Canada. The ANC frequently deploys this thesis.

3. Liberals see apartheid as an antiliberal policy of state interference that distorts market forces and increases labor costs.
4. Marxists see apartheid as a variant of capitalism (termed racial capitalism) characterized by class exploitation and white privilege.
5. Afrikaner nationalists see apartheid as a survival plan designed by a minority group concerned with the political-cultural implications of majoritarian democracy.

P. Eric Louw

See also [African Political Thought](#); [Nationalism](#); [Race and Racism](#); [State, Theories of the](#)

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As'ad AbuKhalil As'ad AbuKhalil

Arab Nationalism

Arab nationalism

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Arab Nationalism

There are various ways to define Arab nationalism and to study political identities in the Arab world. Arab nationalism denotes those political movements that emerged in the nineteenth century and crystallized in the twentieth century, which called for the political unification of the Arabs. The movement went through different phases and acquired many forms over time. But the goal of Arab nationalists has remained unchanged: they seek to break down the twentieth-century borders between Arab states, borders that are seen as the artificial creation of colonialism, and to create an all-encompassing Arab united state.

History

One can trace Arab nationalism back to early Jahili (pre-Islamic poetry) and to early associations between the Arabs and the rise of Islam. The Arab people, or the people of Arabia, have long taken pride in their history and in their tribal lineage. The rise of Islam among the Arabs, the fact that Muhammad (570–632 C.E.) was an Arab, and the fact that Muslims believe that the Qur'an (the holy book for Muslims) was revealed in the Arabic language all gave impetus to Arab national pride of sorts. The Qur'an is, for Muslims, the word of God, literally, and the word of God is in the Arab language. References by Muhammad to "my *ummah*" was understood by Arabs to mean them in particular. The language of the Qur'an cemented the unity of the Arabs, who can read and understand the holy book, regardless

of the various regional accents. The construction of Arabic grammar uses the Qur'an as the model of the correct or perfect Arabic language. Non-Muslim Arabs struggled in vain throughout Islamic history to attain the status of Arab Muslim pride, but Arabs felt superior if only because Muhammad was born to an authentic Arab tribe.

It is true that Islam created what one Orientalist, W. Montgomery Watt, called a super tribe. The super tribe of Muslims, or the Islamic ummah, was supposed to subsume under it, or within it, all other ethnic or social tribes. The ummah was supposed to erase all lines of racial, ethnic, and tribal demarcation, but Arabs could not accord to non-Arabs the same status of prestige that Arabs felt that they deserved.

It is fair to say that there have always been in Islamic history expressions of literary Arab nationalism: various writers spoke of the greatness of Arabs and compared them favorably to non-Arabs (Muslims). But various non-Arab dynasties such as the Ikhshids, Buwahids, and Mongols (even before the rise of the Ottomans) ruled over Arabs and did not take kindly to Arab attitudes of superiority. But the Arabs were humbled by their years and decades of obedience to non-Arab dynasties. Arab nationalist expressions were, so to say, dormant if only because the idea of nationalism was rather unknown.

Early Arab Nationalism

Most histories of Arab nationalism agree that the nineteenth century witnessed the advent of the embryonic form of Arab nationalism. Turkey witnessed the rise of Turkish nationalism, which undermined the Islamic sources of legitimacy for the Ottoman Empire in Muslim lands. Educated Arabs began to organize first in scientific and literary societies and later in broad political movements. Writers were educated at Western institutions and learned about nationalist movements in different parts of the world. And the more Arabs learned of Turkish nationalist sentiment, the more they felt left out. The national recipe of the Ottoman Empire had no room for them. In some ways, the Arab nationalist movement began as an anti-Turkish movement, but it was an expression of the popular yearning for freedom.

The expressions of Arab nationalism were not fully formed at that time. Arabs merely relied on a rich heritage to mobilize the Arabs behind idea of political solidarity. There were links between those early Arab nationalists and Western governments eager to take advantage of the common resentment against the Ottoman Turks. France and Britain were more than happy to shower Arabs with promises of independence in return for support of the anti-Turkish war efforts during World War I.

This was the era of the Husayn-McMahon correspondence (the correspondence between the chief British diplomat and the Arab king of Hijaz entailing a political transaction that was understood by the Arabs—and by most historians—to include Arab independence in the wake of the fall of the Ottoman Empire; some historians still quibble over the exact meaning of different phrases in the text of those letters). The British officially promised to grant Arab independence in return for Arab war effort against the Turks. The rest is part of history: Arabs were unaware that the British had already committed themselves not only to the Balfour Declaration but also to the Sykes-Picot agreement. Sharif Husayn aroused excitement among Arabs: there was a chance—they thought—for the restoration of Arab rule. But all those hopes were dashed with the establishment of the Mandate system in the Arab East and with the crushing of the Faysal government in Damsacus.

Political Arab Nationalism

It would be fair to say that Arab nationalism expanded not only after the creation of the state of Israel, which Arabs saw as a threat to all Arabs, but also after the 1952 coup by Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt. Nasser, who led Egypt from 1952 to 1970, has become the symbol of Arab nationalism. He is credited not only with popularizing the idea of Arab nationalism but also with putting into place concrete plans for unifying the Arabs—all the Arabs. From 1958 to 1961, Syria and Egypt were united in what was called the United Arab Republic. The United Arab Republic inflamed Arab public passions and intensified hopes for a larger all-encompassing Arab state.

Nasserism and later the Ba'ath Party defined the modern understanding of political Arab nationalism. It became centered around key goals: the

establishment of an all-encompassing Arab state, the elimination of the borders between Arab states, the redistribution of income and the promotion of an ill-defined Arab version of socialism, the unification of all Arab people behind one political banner that would achieve economic and political independence, and the liberation of Palestine.

Nasser did not, however, go far with his successes. The United Arab Republic ended in a disaster: the heavy-handed Egyptian rule in Syria resulted in a coup that separated Syria from Egypt. The bitter experience hurt Nasser and undermined the promise of the extension of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) into other countries. It also left Nasser open to the charge that his regime did not transcend the narrow form of Egyptian nationalism, which left the Syrian people embittered. The UAE basically revealed the challenge facing Arab nationalist forces: the conflict between two forms of nationalism in the Arab world.

In the Arab world, people find themselves within multiple concentric circles of nationalism. Primarily, the individual may gravitate toward the Arab nationalist identity while all Arab regimes (except Nasser and the Ba'ath in their early years only) force on the citizen the narrow form of identity, known as *wataniyyah* nationalism, or nationalism within the narrow confines of the state, as opposed to *qawimiyyah* nationalism, or Arab nationalism that wishes to eliminate the very existence of the small states that were designed by Western colonial powers.

But the failure of the UAE project did not in any way end the quest for Arab unity: there followed various attempts at Arab unity between different regimes, but none were serious enough to warrant scholarly consideration or to excite public opinion. However, the era of the 1950s and 1960s witnessed the proliferation of Arab nationalist groups. The Movement of Arab Nationalists, led by George Habash, is the most important modern Arab nationalist political party. While it was sponsored by the Nasserist regime and it received support from Nasser, it had an important impact on contemporary Arab political rhetoric. It was through the Movement of Arab Nationalists that the Palestinian masses were inculcated with the idea of Arab nationalism. And the various Palestinian resistance organizations that

were born before and after the 1967 war with Israel all incorporated ideas of Arab nationalism in their ideologies.

The Ba'ath Party came out in the 1940s from a climate of Arab nationalist fever. The party founded by Michel 'Aflaw and Salah Al-Bitar promised a revival of the Arab renaissance and sought to unite all Arabs. But the dilemma of the Ba'ath Party exhibited the weaknesses in Arab nationalist movements: the party splintered into various factions, different factions ruled over Syria and Iraq, and they engaged in bitter wars that lasted for decades. Furthermore, the Ba'ath, which promised to unite all Arabs, engaged in a bitter feud with Nasser, the embodiment of Arab nationalist ideas for most Arabs at the time. And the party established ruthless, brutal regimes in Syria and Iraq, regimes that made their version of Arab nationalist ideology unappealing.

The death of Nasser in 1970 and the attempt by the Ba'ath parties to monopolize the representation of Arab nationalist ideas dealt a severe blow to Arab nationalism. But the notion that Arab nationalism died with Nasser is fallacious. There is still evidence of the persistence of the Arab nationalist ideas throughout the Arab world. Arab nationalism is still alive insofar as most Arabs still identify (according to various public opinion polls) with the same goals of resisting Israel and uniting the Arabs and sharing a political identity deeply rooted in the long history of the Arab people. Moreover, the proliferation of Arab satellite channels since the 1990s crystallized the formation of an Arab cultural and political personality. All Arabs seem to gravitate toward the same themes and political values, although it would be a mistake to treat all Arabs as a monolithic bloc. While a multiplicity of Arab political parties continues to capture the imagination of the Arab people, and although there is a conflict in the region between secular and fundamentalist trends, Arabs still share common identities and yearnings for more political unity.

The rise of Islamic fundamentalism posed a challenge to Arab nationalism: Islam posits a form of identity that transcends (in theory) all other forms of political, racial, tribal, and national identities. And Islamic fundamentalism was opposed to the political forms of Arab nationalism because they were largely secular: Arab nationalism calls for citizenship that does not

differentiate between an Arab and another and that does not give an advantage to Muslims over non-Muslims. Because they suffered persecution under Nasser, fundamentalists were also affected in their evaluation of Arab nationalism by the Nasserist experience. But even Islamic fundamentalists in the twenty-first century agree that there is such a thing as an Arab nation (*ummah*) and that such references appear in Islamist rhetoric.

The Arab world has been undergoing political transformation: the so-called Arab Spring continues, and appears destined to continue and to change the political landscape of the region. But something about the Arab Spring gives credence to the assumptions of Arab nationalists: why did all Arab uprisings coincide? And why did they all chant the same slogans, and why were all Arabs galvanized by the Tunisian and Egyptian uprisings? Furthermore, Arab uprisings were watched by Arabs on pan-Arab channels and on Arab social media.

Arab nationalism is not only an ideology; it has become a mass sentiment. The Arab people are becoming more aware than ever of their commonality and shared political values. It is true that Arab nationalism was a mass movement from below that was fought from above (by regimes) and by Western powers. The ideas received a big boost when they were championed and promoted by Nasser, the most popular Arab leader of the twentieth century. Obituaries of Arab nationalism have been premature: it is likely that this will be a movement that will last through another century.

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See also [Empire and Political Thought](#); [Nationalism](#)

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John Wolfe Ackerman John Wolfe Ackerman

Arendt, Hannah

Arendt, Hannah

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Arendt, Hannah

Hannah Arendt's political thought was the product of two worlds and of the events that carried her from one to the other: the Germany of the first few decades of the twentieth century in which she received her formal education and began writing, and the United States of the World War II and Cold War eras, where Arendt sought refuge from Nazism and became a widely published author and commentator. Arendt was born in 1906 in Hanover, Germany; her parents came from prominent Jewish families in Königsberg, the capital of East Prussia, today the Russian Kaliningrad. The young family moved there when Arendt's father became incurably ill. A conflict with a teacher led to Arendt's expulsion from high school at fifteen, and her mother arranged for her to go to Berlin, the capital of the new German Weimar Republic and center of its vibrant but conflictual cultural and political scene, to audit courses at the university. After two semesters, Arendt passed her high school examinations and in 1924, enrolled at the University of Marburg. She was drawn there by the reputation of the young professor Martin Heidegger, who had attracted a large student following by proposing a radical critique of the staid tradition of philosophy. Arendt studied philosophy, Protestant theology, and Greek philology, or classics and famously had a romantic relationship with Heidegger, who would subsequently join the National Socialist, or Nazi, party and cooperate actively during its first year in power. Arendt did not complete her studies with Heidegger; she wrote her doctoral dissertation—a philosophical study of a theological topic, the concept of love in the writings of St. Augustine—

at the University of Heidelberg under the supervision of the philosopher Karl Jaspers.

Between the completion of her studies in 1928 and her eventual flight from Germany, Arendt was active as a journalist and, increasingly, in activities of the Zionistische Vereinigung für Deutschland, or Zionist Federation of Germany. Arendt was critical of the Zionists' focus on emigration to Palestine as the only viable response to the predicament of European and German Jews, but she welcomed their opposition to the liberal Jewish establishment's continued pursuit of assimilation in the face of growing German anti-Semitism. After the Nazi takeover in early 1933, Arendt helped the Zionist Federation prepare for the upcoming World Zionist Congress by collecting evidence in the Prussian State Library of the increasingly widespread anti-Semitism in German civil society. She was caught and arrested; released after eight days, Arendt promptly left Germany, escaping over the border to Czechoslovakia and becoming stateless, a category of person whose coming explosion Arendt would analyze in the work that made her famous almost twenty years later, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.

Arendt made her way to Paris, where she worked for several organizations and served as the general secretary of the Paris branch of Youth Aliya. She aided Jewish refugees and supported emigration to Palestine, especially for refugee children. In 1936, Arendt met her second husband, Heinrich Blücher, a self-taught political activist and member of the German Communist Party, who had participated in the attempt to found a workers' republic at the end of World War I and fled Germany after the Nazis began imprisoning their political opponents. When Germany invaded France in 1940, Arendt and Blücher were sent to internment camps for enemy aliens, but France was shortly defeated and Arendt took advantage of the ensuing chaos to leave the camp, whose internees were later transported to Auschwitz. Arendt, Blücher, and Arendt's mother managed to obtain American emergency visas and sail for New York, where Arendt and Blücher arrived in May 1941.

During the remainder of the war, Arendt wrote columns for *Aufbau*, a German-language newspaper founded by Jewish refugees; in them, she

urged the formation of a Jewish army and proposed alternatives to the positions that came to dominate discussions of the future of Palestine, opposing the creation of a Jewish state and warning against a failure to come to an understanding with the Arab coinhabitants of this land. Between 1944 and 1952, Arendt directed the Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction and its successor organization, overseeing the vast effort to locate surviving books and other cultural and spiritual treasures and either return them or place them with Jewish institutions. She also served for several years as senior editor at Schocken Books, the former Berlin publishing house that had been reestablished in New York. By now Arendt was contributing articles to various English-language publications, including *Partisan Review*, *The Nation*, and a number of Jewish journals including *Commentary*. She was also working on *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, a sweeping study of the elements that had crystallized in the political catastrophe of the mid-twentieth century. Upon its publication in 1951, Arendt was featured on the cover of the *Saturday Review of Literature*; she had become a public intellectual in her new home.

Writings

Arendt's thought was initially formed by the philosophical and theological experimentation of the years of the German Weimar Republic, but it quickly became concerned with political questions in the face of the increasing paralysis of Weimar political institutions and the rise of the National Socialist movement, which brought an end to the Republic in 1933 and commenced the official persecution, exclusion, and eventually annihilation of German Jews. In *Love and Saint Augustine*, Arendt first explored the difficulties the Western self has had in engaging in encounters with others in the world through her investigation of the relevance of the neighbor to Augustine's concept of love ([1929] 2006). In writings that followed, Arendt tied this problem to the emergence of the total state, which found one of its realizations in the Nazi party's takeover of the state apparatus. In *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Arendt analyzed the concentration and extermination camps as the apotheosis of this phenomenon and its aspiration to total rule through the elimination of all difference between human beings, an aspiration that could only have the result of total domination. Arendt labeled this destruction of politics *totalitarianism*,

giving it a meaning unique to her usage and linking Nazism and Soviet Bolshevism under Joseph Stalin as two variations on a European and global theme. Her rejection of any aspiration to a supposed autonomous politics that would not take the form of ongoing political encounter with difference also shaped her account of the history and development of modern European anti-Semitism. In the early 1930s, while still in Germany, Arendt had completed most of another book exploring the history of this problem through the life of *Rahel Varnhagen*, a German Jewish woman (1771–1833) who like many of her contemporaries had sought refuge from her uncertain public status in recognition paid to her in the seemingly more open circles of society; in this book, finally published in the late 1950s, Arendt connected this turning inward to the cultural phenomenon of German romanticism and its elevation of the self above all concern with the world.

Arendt's *The Human Condition* ([1958] 1998) contains the celebration of political action that is one of the signal features of her thought. In this book, as well as in her collection of exercises in political thought titled *Between Past and Future*, first published in 1961, and in *On Revolution* (1963), Arendt developed the central terms of her political theory and its confrontation with the tradition of Western political philosophy, which had consistently viewed politics as something to be overcome through a singular, correct vision. In these works, Arendt conceives politics as taking place through the inhabitation of a common world that makes possible encounter across infinite, fluid lines of differences and the varying points of view that they enable. There is thus no politics without the political condition that Arendt calls plurality: "The fact that men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world" (Arendt [1958] 1998, 7). Through politics, given differences between human beings can be experienced not as mere differentiation but as plurality that can be received and negotiated. New political beginnings are possible because plural beings can act into this world with each other—as long as they do not either succumb to that temptation of preoccupation with oneself that Arendt calls world alienation or find themselves forcibly alienated from the world by regimes, such as those she identified as totalitarian, that seek to realize their own rule by destroying politics. Politics manifests itself as "freedom," "the possibility to call something into being which did not exist before" and that could not have been known before it arose (Arendt [1961] 1977, 151); that freedom

can be hoped for, that politics is possible, is grounded in “natality,” the condition of “new beginning inherent in birth [which] can make itself felt in the world . . . because the newcomer possesses the capacity of beginning something anew, that is, of acting” (Arendt [1958] 1998, 9). Freedom is a phenomenon that appears in public, in the “space of appearance” that arises whenever, and as long as, people engage in action with others. Political power too arises, fleetingly, in such “action in concert,” and it cannot outlast such action; it is the very opposite of violence and the “domination of man over man” with which it is often identified. Politics, as Arendt understands it, is also at odds with other phenomena that are often mistakenly identified with it but actually have the effect of displacing politics: sovereignty, for example, and rule, whose triumph in the tradition of political philosophy entailed a disavowal of “the original interdependence of action” and the loss of the understanding of human freedom (Arendt [1958] 1998, 189, 225). Arendt sought to escape that impasse by reconceiving political authority as generated in the very act of political founding and the binding back to that beginning that occurs through ongoing political action; from this understanding, a successful political revolution cannot be founded on violence but on only the foundation of freedom that arises in the constitution of a stable and lasting political order through maintenance of an orientation to the world and each other in which entirely new beginnings can continue to occur and to be received as such, with regularity.

When Arendt died of a heart attack in 1975, her typewriter held the first page of “Judging,” which was to have been the third and final part of her last major work, *The Life of the Mind*. In its first two parts, published from her lecture manuscripts, Arendt had examined the faculties of “Thinking” and “Willing,” returning to the mental activities associated with the philosophical tradition she had rejected to suggest an alternative genealogy in which these activities do not involve a refusal of the manifold world. Much effort has gone into piecing together the argument the third part might have contained, for Arendt had indicated that she considered judgment to be the most political of the activities of the mind—on the condition that judging be understood anew not as the application of preexisting rules but rather as the activity of seeking agreement with others

by imagining oneself in their place to arrive together at a reflective position that did not exist before.

Controversies

Arendt was permanently puzzled by racism and race relations in America, issues she tried to understand in light of her experiences as a Jew in Germany. In an article, “Reflections on Little Rock,” published in 1959, Arendt attempted to apply her analysis of the lethal political backlash against the social emancipation of European Jews to the desegregation of American schools, rejecting the process—integration enforced by the federal government—and arguing that a mistaken focus on acceptance in the social realm deflected attention from the proper struggle for human and political rights. The article provoked a public scandal and the ire of liberal critics. A decade later, Arendt would have similar difficulty commenting on the militant activism of black students on American university campuses, charging them with a destructive turn to violence and dismissing their demands.

But the controversy that defined Arendt for many was the one that erupted around her report on the trial of Adolf Eichmann before an Israeli court, *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1963). Arendt’s report explored how an undistinguished, individual bureaucrat, the head of the Nazi office that oversaw the deportation of Europe’s Jews on the way to their extermination, who apparently himself had little fundamental commitment to this Final Solution of the Jewish problem, could nonetheless administer a policy of eliminating a people from the earth. Arendt sought to understand how there were so many like him who actively cooperated in the annihilation of the Jews at every level of the process—including Jews themselves, who were not immune to the moral collapse caused by the Nazis across society, in Arendt’s diagnosis. She concluded that Eichmann was simply incapable of thinking, dubbing this phenomenon “the banality of evil”; a constant refrain in her work was the call to think what we are doing. But the focus of the outrage that met the book was her depiction of the cooperation of Jewish community leaders who, confronted with demands made by Eichmann and his office, often facilitated the deportations. Arendt linked their actions to European Jews’ broader avoidance of plural political engagement, including

a failure to distinguish political friends and enemies, instead of viewing all interactions with non-Jews in terms of an eternal anti-Semitism, which she argued had tragically worsened Jews' plight when faced with a wholly unprecedented crime. Critics, however, accused Arendt of blaming the Jewish victims for their fate; a concerted publicity campaign largely made her persona non grata in Israel and in the American Jewish community. (A scurrilous, speculative account of Arendt's relationship with Heidegger, based on what survived of their correspondence, published in 1995, reignited the controversy, providing new fodder for those critics still looking for any reason to discredit her thought.)

Legacy

Despite her personal dislike of the spotlight, Arendt found herself a public intellectual in America; the positions she took continue to make classification of her work difficult. Arendt was deeply critical of the consumerism of postwar society, its displacement of politics by public relations, and its turn away from the love of the world toward self-fulfillment. She insisted on the exclusion of the social question from the political domain and opposed the liberal turn toward effecting social progress through a centralized administration. And she wrote of the necessity for civil disobedience in law-governed societies and was a harsh critic of the U.S. war in Vietnam and its effects on U.S. political institutions. Arendt's analysis of totalitarianism was a continuing point of reference for studies of the Soviet Union, although her specific arguments were often overshadowed by Cold War polemics. Her invocations of ancient Greece and Rome and colonial America have led many to read Arendt's work in the tradition of participatory republicanism—and to accuse her of a romantic nostalgia for antiquity according to which politics would be possible only on a small scale and dependent on heroic actions by an elite few. Jürgen Habermas, today's most prominent advocate of deliberative democracy, credits Arendt with being the source of his communication concept of power. Arendt was discovered anew by a broad circle of students of political theory in the 1990s in the wake of the revolutions that brought an end to state socialism in Eastern Europe and by those drawn to her advocacy of a radically pluralist conception of politics. Arendt's work has been an important inspiration for agonistic conceptions

of democracy that emphasize the perpetuity of interaction and dissensus in a world that, as common, provides the site of politics but no source for their resolution.

Arendt's written work rewards careful reading but remains elusive: her major works exist in multiple editions incorporating substantial revisions, as well as significant variations between German and English versions that she often wrote herself. In addition to the major works from Arendt's lifetime, several new collections of writings and lectures, much of her extensive correspondence, and (in German) her diaries have been published since her death, affording a broader perspective on Arendt's intellectual and public activity. The Library of Congress has digitized its holdings of Arendt's papers and made many available online. Arendt's uncompleted manuscript titled "Introduction *into* Politics," issued in the volume *The Promise of Politics* (2005), now provides a highly instructive overview of many of the themes treated elsewhere in her work.

John Wolfe Ackerman

See also [American Political Thought](#); [German Political Thought](#); [Habermas, Jürgen](#); [Heidegger, Martin](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [National Socialism](#); [Pluralism](#); [Republicanism](#); [Romanticism](#); [Totalitarianism](#); [Zionism](#)

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Daniel J. Mahoney Daniel J. Mahoney

Aron, Raymond

Aron, Raymond

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Aron, Raymond

Raymond Aron (1905–83) was a distinguished French philosopher, political thinker, social scientist, and journalist. He wrote influential columns for *Le Figaro* (1947–77) and *L'Express* (1978–83) and played a major role in shaping moderate and conservative opinion in France in the years after World War II. Today, he is widely acknowledged to be one of the most prominent twentieth-century representatives of the French tradition of political liberalism. He was profoundly shaped by his experience of witnessing the rise of National Socialism in Germany as a student in that country in the early 1930s. As he put it in his 1970 inaugural address at the Collège de France, the experience of a civilized country descending into barbarism permanently cured him of “facile progressivism,” the illusion that “history automatically obeys the dictates of reason.”

It was during this period that Aron discovered the sociological and historical reflection of the German sociologist Max Weber, whose thought he admired and did so much to introduce into French intellectual circles. But the mature Aron expressed grave doubts about the excessive pathos and Nietzschean nihilism that he came to see just beneath the surface of Weber’s austere methodological reflections. Aron increasingly turned to an array of thinkers—the political Aristotle, Alexis de Tocqueville, and Charles-Louis Montesquieu among them, who provided a firmer foundation for his own choice of political moderation over fanaticism in its various forms. In a series of writings culminating in *The Opium of the Intellectuals* ([1957] 2001), Aron criticized the indulgence of progressive intellectuals

toward totalitarian regimes and ideologies and dissected the myths of the left, revolution, and the proletariat, respectively. Despite a well-deserved reputation for thoughtful and balanced political analysis (Aron always insisted that the principal virtue of the social scientist was equity, not neutrality), he won the unrelenting enmity of Jean-Paul Sartre, who never tired of dismissing him as an “anti-communist dog.” For many French intellectuals in the decades after World War II, it was “better to be wrong with Sartre than right with Aron,” to cite a saying that widely circulated at that time.

Aron was a remarkably prolific writer and scholar. The author of at least forty-five books and of dozens of others that appeared posthumously, he wrote about modern political regimes and industrial societies in a manner that affirmed the essential autonomy of politics, theorized about international relations (he was a harsh critic of the realist-idealist dichotomy so central to contemporary international relations theory), and wrote influential interpretations of such classic political and philosophical thinkers as Niccolò Machiavelli, Karl Marx, and Tocqueville. His masterworks such as *Paix et guerre entre les nations* (1962) and *Penser la guerre, Clausewitz* (1976) explored the intersection of political philosophy and international relations. They combined encyclopedic learning and moderate and humane judgment with what Aron’s friend and contemporary Bertrand de Jouvenel called “the sadness of the political thinker.” For Aron, there was no end of history in sight. The best hope was to cultivate moderation and to bring violence under salutary political control. Aron was a tough-minded moderate, a conservative-minded liberal, who at the end of his life worried that liberal societies had forgotten that free men were citizens with duties and not merely individuals with rights. For his admirers, such as the French political theorist Pierre Manent, he was that rarity, an orator and civic educator “who spoke with authority and competence and eloquence about the public thing” (2010.) He remains an important intellectual, political, and scholarly reference point in France and in many countries around the world, including the former communist countries of east-central Europe.

Daniel J. Mahoney

See also [Liberalism](#)

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Tod Moore Tod Moore

Australasian Political Thought (Australia And New Zealand)

Australasian political thought (Australia And New Zealand)

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Australasian Political Thought (Australia and New Zealand)

Political ideas in Australia and New Zealand (Aotearoa) reflect the British settler origins of both societies, especially provincial British and Irish ideologies during the period of settlement in the nineteenth century—slightly later in the case of New Zealand. Discourses have taken place within a context of prevailing secular liberalism and a high degree of consensus favoring parliamentary democracy. Both societies grew in a context of industrial life but were initially focused on rural production being integrated into the economy of the British empire at its height. They shared the paradox of great distance from the colonial metropole inhibiting rather than hastening the emergence of independent thought. In both cases, the Indigenous people were badly dealt with during the settlement period and after, and this treatment has had a chastening effect on political thought. In spite of the many political similarities, some differences have emerged, and New Zealand political ideas will be examined, including themes that both countries share, after looking at the Australian experience.

Australian Political Thought

Academic writing on the political tradition in Australia has been sparse, giving a misleading impression that ideas have not been present in politics. Political tourists such as Albert Metin and Andre Siegfried who visited

Australia and New Zealand in the period around 1900 claimed that there were no grand debates, only a politics of interest. The first academic account of Australian political thought by Peter Loveday in 1975, only twenty-six pages, supports this judgment. Ten years later, Bill Brugger and Dean Jaensch (1985) provided an ideological account of popular political ideas in two chapters, and at the same time Graham Maddox published the first edition of *Australian Democracy* in which Australian contributions to democratic thought were first taken seriously. Many chapter-length accounts, including those collected in a 1994 volume edited by Geoff Stokes as well as intellectual biographies, provide a fuller view of the large amount of source material. James Walter (2010) has demonstrated the utility of using discourses as markers for the activities and publics of political intellectuals in an account that benefits from the Gramscian concept of organic intellectuals. Finally, political economists and labor historians have constructed a body of literature on debates within working-class organizations and political parties.

The Early Period

Although most interest surrounds later periods, there were political debates and political ideas in the settlement period. The penal settlement of 1788 expanded under the autocratic administration of Lachlan Macquarie in the 1810s, which sought to extend public works and integrate former convicts with free settlers. One free settler, W. C. Wentworth, spoke of creating a new Britannia and of recognizing the rights of rehabilitated felons, but most of that group spurned the ex-convict majority. This embryonic struggle was overtaken by events in the 1830s when colonial administrators realized the vast potential in the sale of land previously confiscated from the Indigenous people. Revenues could be partly used to finance immigration, which in turn generated more land sales. When the British attempted to reintroduce convicts in the late 1840s, the newly augmented population rose as one to resist and the policy lapsed. The 1830s also saw widespread illegal land occupation by some enterprising and wealthy immigrants who became known as Squatters. The Squatters combined with other large landowners to form the first political elite that dominated the small council set up in 1828 in New South Wales to advise the governor.

Some students of Australian political thought have followed U.S. historian Frederick Jackson Turner by emphasizing the frontier as imprinting culture upon the British and Irish underclass represented by emancipated convicts turned rural workers, while others have followed another U.S. theorist, Louis Hartz, in stressing the 1830s wave of migration that implanted fragments of working-class British society that were sympathetic to Chartism. Both the bush legend stereotype of rural workers shaped by the advancing frontier and the Chartist fragment thesis based on transplanted British provincial paupers are challenged by yet another twist of history, an immense gold rush in the newly established colony of Victoria in the early 1850s. The gold mining that catapulted Victoria to the forefront of economic life coincided with a radical government in Britain that adapted the 1828 Durham Report on responsible government for Canada to the Australasian colonies, and the implementation of the policy coincided with an armed rebellion of miners at Ballarat in 1854 claiming political rights. When the colonial parliaments were constituted in 1856 and 1857, their highly representative lower houses and dangerously powerful upper houses reflected the intervening debates in the colonies, which pitched democratically minded citizens against the landowning elite.

A useable pamphlet literature and corresponding amounts of newspaper and magazine material that appear from this time until the 1880s confirm the dominance of liberalism of the form associated with John Stuart Mill. Victorian writers after the late 1850s consistently supported a high tariff policy, which became entrenched via the influence of David Syme and his newspaper *The Age*, and a contrasting low tariff policy in New South Wales was associated with Henry Parkes and George Reid. The tariff issue reflected different philosophies of economic development, with Syme supporting the industrial path to prosperity and the Parkes group supporting agriculture and Cobdenite free trade. This free-trade philosophy was a variant of the individualist and idealist British liberalism of Richard Cobden and Richard Bright that was later associated with William Gladstone. Parkes had been exposed to Chartism before emigrating in the 1830s, and in Sydney he joined the Stenhouse Circle, a loose federation of writers inspired by J. D. Lang. Lang championed high immigration in the 1840s but is better remembered for his sectarian Presbyterian brand of republicanism modeled on the United States.

Political life before the 1880s was haphazard with no real parties and little theoretical questioning of liberalism. The power of the landowning elites had been broken by acts for closer settlement beginning in 1860, and the broad franchise forced aspiring politicians to canvass widely. The most progressive of the liberal intellectuals was Charles Pearson (connected to the circle of Mill before emigrating) who championed education and social improvement generally, but always in a context of self-help. Large immigration during the 1870s and early 1880s maintained a situation where most of the citizenry was British or Irish born, the Irish element being about a quarter. Trade unions grew in this period from the craft unions in the building and construction industries that won the eight-hour day in 1856 to embrace large numbers of sheep shearers and miners, but these developments are not associated with any ideological movements apart from the union ideal itself. The newspaper and periodical press provided a public sphere for intellectuals, and a key development in this area was the founding of a radical weekly in 1880 called *The Bulletin*.

The Golden Age

The pages of *The Bulletin* show how political thought in Australia passed through a liminal period roughly between 1885 and 1895. The semisocialism of Henry George's 1879 text *Progress and Poverty* caught on in Australasia because the phenomenon of land speculation was as familiar in Australia as in California, and many land nationalization societies emerged. The logical next step to full socialism was encouraged by the rapid growth of socialism in Britain. The simultaneous establishment in Sydney in 1887 of an Australian Socialist League and an Economic Association, venues of socialism and liberalism respectively, is emblematic. Larger strikes in the 1880s facilitated the spread of socialism, and union newspapers provided a medium for new ideas. Marxism arrived via the 1887 edition of *Capital*, present in many public libraries, the first nine chapters of which circulated in booklet form. Such ideas were mainly filtered, however, via the U.S. writers Laurence Gronlund and especially Edward Bellamy, whose utopian novel *Looking Backward* was massively popular in Australia and New Zealand. The Brisbane based organizer William Lane summed up the popularity of these ideas with his slogan "socialism is being mates." Utopian, dystopian, and related literature

flowered briefly, including Lane's 1892 novel *The Workingman's Paradise* and the 1889 utopian science fiction by Joseph Fraser *Melbourne and Mars* depicting a society where technological progress had caused the abolition of all property and the advent of world federation.

These developments took on greater significance with the formation and success of the union-based Australian Labor Party (ALP). After the positive experience of industrial unionism during the 1880s and the workers' victory in the London Dockworkers' Strike of 1889, there were large but failed Australian strikes in 1890, 1891, 1892, and 1894. After the bitter experience of the 1890 strike, the project of a union political party, debated throughout the 1880s, was completed in 1891 with the formal establishment of the ALP. The 1891 shearers' strike also produced iconic verses on social justice by Australia's most revered poet, Henry Lawson. In these years, *The Bulletin* supported a variety of political ideas including socialism, republicanism, high tariffs, federation, and opposition to immigration—especially non-British immigration—and these ideas were linked to the bush legend stereotype.

Liberalism was itself undergoing changes, although these relied less on local factors such as strikes and more on the new ideology being developed in Britain, especially at Oxford. The small Australian universities had started to teach courses in history and philosophy, and at Sydney, two key liberals were Walter Scott, a protégé of Benjamin Jowett, and Francis Anderson, a protégé of Edward Caird. In Melbourne, the rising intellectual in politics was Alfred Deakin who also followed the new liberalism, although with generous admixtures of Mill via his mentor Charles Pearson. Another rising liberal was B. R. Wise, who returned to Sydney after having been a keen follower in Oxford of Arnold Toynbee and of the free-trade ideas of the Cobdenites. Their writings are idealist and often refer to the common good and notions of duty or Hegelian concepts of the state, but they also supported the policy of arbitration of industrial disputes that arose in 1886 and grew to become the favored response to class struggle. They gravitated to causes such as imperial federation, which encouraged the study of international relations. The old laissez-faire liberalism kept some adherents, most notably Bruce Smith, who published a number of books critical of state interference.

The nationalism of *The Bulletin* was brittle and tentative, but in 1901, Australia became an independent dominion of the British empire. Federation of the six colonies, renamed states, took place sporadically from the early 1880s through the boost given by Parkes in 1889 and the conventions in 1891, and in 1897 to 1898, to the promulgation of the Constitution in London in 1900. Most of the voluminous political writing surrounding the process, especially during the referendum campaigns of 1898 and 1899, is legalistic. Socialists such as Bernard O'Dowd argued unsuccessfully for a "No" vote because the federal Constitution was seen as undemocratic. The pragmatism of the architects of federation prevented inclusion of citizenship clauses, and progressive liberals such as Deakin and H. B. Higgins were only narrowly able to insert arbitration and age pension clauses. The political atmosphere after the early 1890s had shifted and by January 1, 1901, when the Commonwealth was born-political debate had cooled considerably.

Federation to World War I

Foremost among the reasons for federation was military preparedness. Writings by T. R. Roydhouse, Edward Dyson, and others purported to demonstrate an Asian menace to the north. The Boer War of 1898 to 1902 was strongly endorsed by some, and just as strongly repudiated by others; liberals Higgins and G. A. Wood saw it as a British exercise in imperialism. The rising suburban professional middle class was more stridently pro-British than the British born of earlier times and denigrated all things Australian, a tendency observable for at least the next fifty years. Early Commonwealth parliaments were in Melbourne, and liberalism flourished there in venues such as the Boobooks dinner club founded by Frederic Eggleston in 1902. One of the first products of the Commonwealth was the White Australia policy of immigration restriction based on concepts of race, restrictions that were endorsed by socialists and liberals alike. In the 1920s, Eggleston became unpopular among London liberals for refusing to disavow the policy.

While social liberalism had vanquished laissez-faire ideas and entrenched arbitration, socialism was becoming more divided. The ongoing electoral success of the ALP exposed theorists such as W. A. Holman to the realities

of government, and together with the hostility of the Irish religious to socialism after the papal encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, this produced a shift away from Bellamy and toward Fabianism. Piecemeal gas-and-water socialism was pursued by the ALP in government resulting in a number of state-owned enterprises. Earlier, the role of the state in building railways and in other functions had impressed observers of the Australian and New Zealand colonies and had given these a reputation as social laboratories. Just before the ALP triumph in the 1910 Commonwealth elections, several ALP intellectuals—including W. M. (Billy) Hughes, H. I. Jenson, and W. G. Spence—published writings that supported the moderate union ideal of collective defense from excessive capitalism and state ownership of natural monopolies. Growing interest in Marxism was manifest in the formation of an Australian offshoot of the Chicago-based Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). By the time the ALP swept to office in 1910, the IWW was importing shipments of Marxist literature, including the edition of *Capital* published in Chicago by the Charles Kerr printing collective.

The experience of World War I cast a long shadow over political life and thought. With sixty thousand Australians dead and three times that number maimed, there were few not touched in some way by human tragedy, and it was the same for New Zealand. Australia fought for Britain but paid its own way, stimulating industry but also creating massive public debt (hence the remark by socialist Frank Anstey that Australia was “renting trenches”). Large-scale war created the combined

Australian and New Zealand force known as ANZAC, and Gallipoli remains central to nationalism in both countries. British atrocities in Ireland in 1916 had severe repercussions in the ALP so that ALP Prime Minister Hughes needed to hold a referendum to legitimate the introduction of conscription for overseas service. He tried twice, in 1916 and 1917, narrowly losing each. These conscription debates tore Australian society apart and split the ALP. They produced aggressive writing in which imperial nationalism fought Irish outrage, Marxism, pacifism, and feminism. The IWW was blamed for undermining the war effort, especially after a large strike in 1917, leading to political surveillance and increased press censorship.

Between the Wars

Middle-class suburbs grew apace, and with suburbia came automobiles and electric appliances, including radio. There was an observable slump in political writings in the middle of the 1920s. In 1919, a liberal organization, the Worker's Educational Association, sponsored publication of *Democracy and Freedom* in which Elton Mayo supported social organicism within a liberal framework. Later in the decade, Eggleston wrote bitterly against state enterprises, and his manuscript formed a basis for W. K. Hancock's *Australia* of 1930, which is the archetypal statement of Australian liberalism, combining concern for the common good with defense of property rights and disdain for public ownership and arbitration.

The Russian Revolution was eagerly studied by socialists, but as R. S. Ross, the leading Marxist, pointed out, the vanguard party was uniquely fitted to Czarist realities and had dubious relevance. In 1920, the Australian Communist Party was formed, and though it recycled Comintern material, it did encourage original writings by K. S. Pritchard, L. P. Fox, and others. Following the repression of the IWW and the failure of attempts to set up "One Big Union," some of these Marxists flirted with the Communist Party. When the political left revived in the late 1930s, there were few of these industrial Marxists left, and the Communist Party was the only alternative to the ALP. The other Marxist of note was V. Gordon Childe, whose 1923 book *How Labour Governs* remains a classic account of reformism, betrayal, and the evolution of a spoils system in party politics. Childe left Australia to become one of the leading figures in twentieth-century archaeology.

The economic crisis of 1929 to 1932 produced abundant literature, but mostly it took the form of unorthodox economic remedies and reactionary polemic. Orthodox economists became popular as savior figures pressuring the new ALP government for a deflationary monetary policy. Only in the 1940s did the U.S. New Deal inspire welfarism, fiscal policy, and Keynesianism. The middle class sprouted secret armies such as the fascist New Guard, which failed to prosper. Liberalism persisted behind formal associations such as the Australian Institute of Political Science and shadowy roundtable groups, and the annual anthologies of the AIPS are a

valuable source for social liberal thought. One distinctive text of nationalism emerged, however: P. R. Stephensen's *The Foundations of Culture in Australia*.

War, Reconstruction, and Menzies

Forced to defend itself from Japanese attack, Australia rapidly industrialized and became self-reliant, although paradoxically also embraced an alliance with the United States. Victory brought with it determination to maintain full employment via state intervention in the economy championed by Keynesians such as H. C. Coombs. A more assured sense of Australian identity is found in the writings of Brian Fitzpatrick on economic history. The ALP governments of John Curtin and Ben Chifley built industry to fight the war and employ returning military personnel. Curtin's popularity was disastrous for the other side of politics, and in 1944, Robert Menzies attempted to rebuild the anti-Labor vote by forming a new Liberal Party. His 1944 radio broadcast on *The Forgotten People* has become the key text for that side of politics and is a restatement of themes from Hancock and Eggleston.

When Menzies won the 1949 election, he retained most of the nation-building policies of Chifley but embarked on a crusade against the Communist Party, a crusade that failed but did stimulate writing on civil liberties. His prime ministership lasted until 1966, and his main contribution was the expansion of suburbs and universities. Donald Horne's *The Lucky Country* of 1966 marks disenchantment and a libertarian turn, while conscription linked to the Vietnam War united dissenting voices and produced pungent countercultural critiques such as *Oz* magazine. The consensus of moderate socialism and social liberalism was now being challenged by the rise of new social movements. Australasian universities were now producing important intellectuals, and some made their mark internationally, often by relocating to larger centers. Some examples include Germaine Greer and Carole Pateman in feminism, J. G. A. Pocock in history of political thought, and Hedley Bull in international relations.

Modern Times

Apart from the election of the ALP under Gough Whitlam in 1972 and the controversial dismissal of Whitlam by the governor-general in 1975, economic change rather than political events has dominated the intellectual landscape. Following the demise of the Bretton Woods system of worldwide capital controls in 1971, the simultaneous unemployment and inflation of the mid-1970s and 1980s caused ideas to shift away from the postwar consensus and Keynesianism toward laissez-faire liberalism. Both major parties adopted market economics, and in 1992, *The End of Certainty* by Paul Kelly lauded this Gramscian hegemony over democratic socialism and social liberalism. Indigenous and environmental politics moved into view with contributions by Tim Rowse and Tim Flannery, among others, and the events of 1975, catalyzed a growing literature on adoption of a republic. Financial events since 2008 caused some writers including former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd to return to an examination of the merits of the postwar ideological consensus, and laissez-faire liberalism has passed out of favor.

New Zealand

British settlement formally commenced in 1840, and immigration rapidly grew after 1870 with intakes from provincial Britain remaining high until the 1930s. With early settlement having been inspired by ideas of Edward Gibbon Wakefield, ideas that stressed the need for high land prices and low labor costs as a spur to development, thrift, and self-help, it is not surprising that settlers were more middle class than in Australia, especially in the Wakefield settlements at places such as Petone, Nelson, and Taranaki. This pattern is not applicable to all areas, and Otago, for example, was not a Wakefield experiment but had Presbyterian roots. Geographical factors (rich soils and reliable rainfall) enabled small farms to prosper as they had been unable to in Australia, and the population as a result was less urbanized and the economy more agricultural. Size and distance conspired with constant immigration to create high dependence upon British political ideas and to perpetuate British identity. Like Canada and the United States but unlike Australia, the act of settlement was accompanied by a treaty with the Indigenous owners, and even though the Treaty of Waitangi of 1840 was honored more in the breach than in the observance, it has permitted and shaped dialogue.

Parliamentary politics became ideologically contested from the 1870s onward following the violence of the previous decade or so associated with land taking and Maori resistance in the North Island. Liberalism flourished as in Australia except that land politics had not yet been damped down by acts against large estates, and the smaller farmers were still discovering their electoral power. The leading liberals of the 1880s and 1890s were Robert Stout and William Pember Reeves, both of whom combined roles as intellectuals and parliamentarians. Stout was still a classical liberal in the 1870s, deriving his position mainly from John Stuart Mill and especially Herbert Spencer. The unemployment of the 1880s and sharpening class antagonisms offended his immigrant sensibilities, which saw New Zealand as a venue for social harmonism. He developed a philosophy similar to T. H. Green and particularly Arnold Toynbee from whom he borrowed the concept of arbitration of industrial disputes. Stout was the intellectual force behind the adoption of arbitration in 1894, which together with female suffrage in 1893 forms one of the principal claims of New Zealand as a social laboratory. Reeves was such a progressive liberal that he could be regarded as a mild socialist, yet he famously distanced himself from socialism, especially the Edward Bellamy variety. In the 1890s, he championed many trade union causes, although this advocacy proved too much for the mainly rural electorate, and his political career ended abruptly in 1895 when he went to London as agent-general. In 1902 (2011), he published his best known work *State Experiments in Australia and New Zealand*. His social liberalism resembles that of Australians such as Deakin and Henry Wrixon especially in its frank advocacy of state provision of services or state socialism.

The Liberal Party to which Reeves belonged took upon itself the representation of workers in the early 1890s, and thus, there was not the same pressure that created the ALP. New Zealand waited until 1916 for the advent of the Labour Party, and this party was more like its British namesake than the ALP. In the meantime, Marxist intellectuals sympathetic to the IWW were active including H. E. Holland and James Roberts, both of whom later moderated their theories and joined the Labour Party. Holland produced many pamphlets adapting Marxism to New Zealand conditions and followed Ross as editor of *The Maoriland Worker*. The ideas of Henry

George were widely discussed and adapted, creating pressure to break up large estates in favor of small holdings.

The Labour Party came to power for the first time in 1935 and established the welfare state by developing New Deal policies that had been discussed in Britain, putting them into practice before other countries did. The embrace of welfarist and Keynesian ideas was a pragmatic response to the social crisis but was theorized by J. A. Lee and other party intellectuals. There was also much writing on the Social Credit concept, which belongs to the same category as Henry George—a radical reform that does not affect small owners. In this respect, New Zealand is more like rural Canada than Australia.

The end of the postwar consensus in New Zealand parallels the Australian experience with a Labour Party government taking power in 1984 and immediately introducing measures to deregulate the economy. This version of Thatcherite market economics became known by the name of the treasurer Roger Douglas—Rogernomics. Policies of Rogernomics sought to reform a sleepy economy via financial deregulation, a floating currency, wage restraint, tax cuts, free trade, and monetarism. As in Australia, these ideas were hegemonic and had no popular mandate, and in New Zealand, they went further than they did in Australia. The fragmented intellectual left was placated by adoption of antinuclear policies, and this caused a 1985 ban on visits by U.S. warships, which challenged the alliance. During the 1970s, Maori leaders insisted on observance of the treaty, and a Waitangi Tribunal set up in 1975 helped to focus debates on Indigenous social justice concerns. An original contribution to political thought during this period was Richard Mulgan's 1984 text *Democracy and Power in New Zealand*, which explores the strengths of pragmatism in a small democracy and includes discussion of Maori democracy. In Australia, Aboriginal political ideas have frequently emphasized need for a treaty and related sovereignty issues whereas Maori ideas have been able to move beyond such fields. Maori thinking has flourished in several areas including identity, feminism, and resource management, and this has affinities with Indigenous theorizing in North America.

Tod Moore

See also [George, Henry](#); [Keynes, John Maynard](#); [Liberalism](#); [Mill, John Stuart](#); [Social Democracy](#); [Socialism](#)

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Paul McLaughlin Paul McLaughlin

Authoritarianism

Authoritarianism

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Authoritarianism

See Authority; Liberalism; Totalitarianism

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Authority

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Authority

Authority is a core concept in political theory, one that picks out a significant feature of sociopolitical practices, relations, and institutions. Of course, the concept is not restricted to this area of inquiry. In fact, it troubles theorists in many areas, from jurisprudence to sociology to social epistemology. Three general problems face such theorists in their investigation of authority. The first problem is conceptual: what does authority mean? The second problem is classificatory: what are the different forms of authority? And the third problem is evaluative: how can authority be justified or legitimated?

For the most part, political theorists have focused on the issue of political authority. Indeed, they have generally focused—even more narrowly—on the political authority of the state. Thus, they have attempted to explain the nature of the political authority of the state, the relationship between such authority and other kinds of authority (such as the authority of other polities), and the justifiability or legitimacy of such authority. Some political theorists even take the last of these issues—the issue of legitimacy (as opposed to, say, that of distributive justice)—to be the fundamental problem of their discipline. They argue, for example, that it makes little sense to ask what role states should play in the distribution of the benefits and burdens of social life if they are illegitimate in the first place. Only legitimate states are in a normative position to play a distributive role, just or otherwise. Of course, others argue that states can only be legitimated by being just.

Whatever is to be said about this particular dispute concerning theoretical fundamentals, we can attempt to map out some (purported) solutions to the three problems—conceptual, classificatory, and evaluative—introduced above, at least in so far as these are relevant to political theory.

The Conceptual Problem

Authority has been explained (among other ways) as a species of social power and as a species of normative power. The former line of explanation has been advanced by sociologists of power in the tradition of the German sociologist Max Weber. The latter has been advanced by philosophers of practical reason in the tradition of the Israeli philosopher Joseph Raz. On the sociological account, then, authority is understood as a species of domination—as a controlling capacity in human relations—which is understood, in turn, as a species of social power—as an effective capacity in human relations. Thus, authority involves more than the capacity of one party to have an effect or influence on another party, or even more than the capacity of one party to have a controlling effect or influence on another party. It appears to involve the capacity of one party to “rightfully” exercise a controlling effect or influence on another party. Authority, in other words, appears to amount to rightful domination. Thus, parents, for example, seem to have more than a capacity to control their children’s behavior. They seem to have a capacity to rightfully control their children’s behavior, and it is in this that their (practical) authority is often held to consist. Adult strangers, by contrast, may possess a controlling capacity over the same children, but they lack an authoritative right (at least of the relevant kind) to control these children.

Such an account of authority may seem plausible initially (if we can make sense of rightfulness). However, there are familiar cases of rightful social control that we tend to regard as nonauthoritative. When, for instance, an adult stranger forcibly prevents a child from recklessly crossing a busy street, we may think that he or she is rightfully exercising a controlling capacity over the child in question, even though he or she is no authority with respect to the child. Authority, therefore, seems to amount to something other or more than rightful domination or legitimate social control.

On the philosophical account, authority is understood, again, as a species of normative power or the power of one party to require action and (more contentiously) the acceptance of belief from another party. In order to make sense of authority so understood, some have argued that it is necessary to understand the way in which it figures in the practical reasoning of its subjects. The directives of an authority—authoritative utterances such as commands or (some would say) expert advice—may be seen to constitute appeals to the reasoning of its subjects about how to act or which beliefs to accept. The problem here is, then, how to explain the exact manner in which authoritative utterances figure in our reasoning. One suggestion, made by the British philosopher H. L. A. Hart, is that such utterances provide us with content-independent reasons for action or the acceptance of belief. To put this point very simply, what matters from the perspective of the subject of authority is who produces an authoritative utterance, not what the utterance entails (its content). If my boss commands me to ϕ , what matters is that it is my boss who is commanding me to ϕ , not that he or she is commanding me *to* ϕ ; in principle, he or she could have commanded me to χ or to not- ϕ .

The provision of content-independent reasons is not sufficient to distinguish authoritative utterances, however, since other utterances such as promises and threats are also understood to provide us with such reasons. A further suggestion, then, is that authoritative utterances provide us, in addition to content-independent reasons, with peremptory reasons for action or the acceptance of belief. In other words, these utterances are intended to cut off our reasoning about how to act or which beliefs to accept so that authority can be understood to require the surrender of private judgment and perhaps to conflict with certain principles of rationality or autonomy.

The claim that authoritative utterances provide us with peremptory reasons may be rejected as implausible. After all, authorities are typically indifferent to our deliberations; all they require is actual conformity with their directives, or that we act or accept beliefs as directed. An alternative suggestion is that authoritative utterances provide us, in addition to content-independent reasons, with exclusionary reasons (rather than peremptory reasons) for action or the acceptance of belief. That is to say, authoritative utterances provide us with nonordinary reasons for action or the acceptance

of belief, reasons that exclude and take the place of some of our ordinary reasons against such action or acceptance of belief. If my boss commands me to ϕ , he or she is providing me with a reason that excludes some of my reasons to not- ϕ (such as the fact that ϕ bores me or I would rather χ). If this account of authority is correct, then, we can say that someone (such as a boss) has authority over us if and only if the fact that he or she requires us to ϕ gives us a content-independent reason to ϕ and excludes some of our reasons to not- ϕ .

The Classificatory Problem

A standard classification of the forms of authority rests on the distinction between practical authority, or authority in matters of conduct, and theoretical authority, or authority in matters of belief. If the philosophical account of authority outlined above is generally applicable—that is, applicable to both practical and theoretical authority—then the following ought to hold: A has practical authority over B if and only if the fact that A requires B to do X gives B a content-independent reason to do X and excludes some of B's reasons not to do X; A has theoretical authority over B if and only if the fact that A requires B to accept belief Y gives B a content-independent reason to accept belief Y and excludes some of B's reasons not to accept belief Y. However, no major philosopher believes that the account is generally applicable: most philosophers hold that it is applicable to practical authority only. Why, then, do they deny the applicability of this account to theoretical authority? Basically, because they deny that theoretical authorities have normative power (or are authorities in the sense that they investigate): they deny that such authorities require or even could require the acceptance of belief. Requiring the acceptance of belief is psychologically impossible, and even if it were possible, theoretical authorities simply do not require it. However, both claims—the psychological claim about belief formation and the philosophical claim about normative power—are debatable. The philosophical claim, for example, may rest on the conceptual confusion results from the identification of theoretical authority with expertise. In attempting to clear up this confusion, one might attempt to show that some theoretical authorities (parents, for example) are not experts and that even that some

experts (scientific researchers who make no authoritative claims, for example) are not theoretical authorities.

The interest of political theorists in authority is generally an interest in a particular kind of practical authority—or authority to which the philosophical model is (less contentiously) applicable—namely, the political authority of the state. Of course, one might deny that the authority of the state is only political or only practical. Thus, one might argue that the practical authority of the state is legal as well as political and that the state (at least in certain instances) exercises theoretical as well as practical authority. To be precise, one ought to distinguish between political and legal authority, though it seems that many theorists have both in mind when they refer to the political authority of the state. As for the theoretical authority of the state (or some states), this is generally held by political theorists to be beyond the scope of their discussion in so far as it is beyond the scope of legitimacy. Since such authority is self-evidently illegitimate, one might suppose (reasonably or otherwise) it does not require further theoretical discussion.

What, then, distinguishes the political authority of the state from other forms of practical social power, domination, or authority? There is no consensus on this issue. But one suggestion (by the Scottish philosopher Leslie Green) is that the authority of the state is distinguished by its supremacy, pervasiveness, and breadth of scope. That is to say, the state is the highest authority within a given territory or over a given population, its authority regulates the vital interests of everyone within that territory or population, and (most problematically) its authority operates on a large territorial or demographic scale, relative to other social and political configurations.

The Evaluative Problem

What all of the above means is that the authority of the state is evident where A (a state official) requiring B (a subject of the state) to do X gives B a content-independent reason to do X and excludes some of B's reasons not to do X, in circumstances where this authority is supreme, pervasive, and broad in scope. The evaluative question that arises in this context is whether

such authority is justifiable, or (what may or may not amount to the same question) whether the authority of the state is legitimate with respect to its subjects (typically understood as citizens). If the authority of the state is legitimate with respect to its subjects, then these subjects are usually held to have political obligations toward the state. That is to say, in accordance with what has been called the correlativity thesis, legitimacy entails obligations and vice versa. But how might legitimacy be established? Has it been established? Could it ever be established?

The principal means by which the political authority of the state might be legitimated are various but broadly classifiable as consequentialist and nonconsequentialist. By consequentialist means, one might establish legitimacy with respect to a particular good (such as utility) the state serves to promote. By nonconsequentialist means, one might establish legitimacy with respect to certain standards of right (such as consent, fairness, or justice) the state respects. Indeed, in pluralistic fashion, one might argue that different aspects of the state's authority are legitimated in terms of different moral principles. However, reflecting on the various arguments that have been offered for the legitimacy of the political authority of the state, one might conclude that none of these arguments succeeds, that no known argument establishes what it is supposed to establish, and that the political authority of the state is therefore illegitimate. This is the position of the a posteriori philosophical anarchist. The a priori philosophical anarchist makes a stronger case against the political authority of the state, arguing that legitimacy could never be established since state authority necessarily conflicts with, for example, a moral duty of autonomy. The political anarchist, by contrast, is usually characterized as holding that the state ought to be challenged practically in virtue of the illegitimacy of its political authority (whether this is established on a posteriori or a priori grounds).

Paul McLaughlin

See also [Anarchism](#); [Legitimacy](#); [Power](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Weber, Max](#)

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Autonomy

Autonomy

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Autonomy

The term *autonomy* stems from two Greek words: *autos*, meaning self, and *nomos*, meaning rule or law. The term originally applied to Greek city-states that were self-ruling but has come to be used primarily to refer to individual persons who are self-ruling and hence autonomous. This focus on the autonomy of persons has led to the concept of autonomy playing a significant role in modern political thought. One of the justifications of democratic institutions is that they respect the autonomy of those who participate in them, enabling them to exercise their autonomy in choosing their political leadership or the policies and laws that they will be subject to. Similarly, many state services ranging from the provision of welfare and healthcare to the provision of education and the regulation of business are justified on the grounds that they would either promote or protect personal autonomy, while those who object to such state involvement in the lives of its citizens often do so on the basis that it compromises the autonomy of those subject to it. A concern for personal autonomy has also been used to justify freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, and the right to engage in acts that might be either immoral or harmful to the person performing them, such as the recreational use of illegal drugs.

While it is agreed that an autonomous person is a self-ruling person, there are two ways of understanding what this self-rule requires. The eighteenth-century German philosopher Immanuel Kant believed that a person was autonomous with respect to his or her actions if he or she performed them in accordance with the moral law that should guide the actions of all

rational agents. As such, Kant believed that a person was autonomous only when he or she acted in the belief that the action that he or she performed could be performed by all rational agents in his or her situation without leading to any logical contradictions. Thus, for Kant, a person could not lie autonomously, for were all rational agents to lie the point of lying would be undermined since no one would trust the word of another.

This impersonal Kantian view of autonomy has been largely supplanted in modern political thought with an understanding of autonomy as personal autonomy. On this view, a person is autonomous with respect to his or her desires or by his or her actions if he or she is the product of his or her own desires and values, rather than being used as the conduit for the desires and values of others. This account of autonomy needs to provide a way to determine when a person's desires and values are his or her own to ground the claim that he or she is autonomous with respect to them. One prominent way of grounding this claim has been provided by Harry Frankfurt with his hierarchical account of personal autonomy. On this view, a person is autonomous with respect to a desire that he or she has for some external object if he or she both wants to have that desire and wants it to be effective in leading him or her to act if, that is, he or she has a second-order volition endorsing the desire in question.

This hierarchical account of personal autonomy faces three objections. The first is the problem of authority: why should it be assumed that a person's higher-order desires are more reflective of what he or she really wants? A woman might have been socialized into wanting to be a good wife and mother and so volitionally repudiates her desires to remain single and pursue a career. There is no reason to assume that her volitional repudiation is more indicative of what she really wants than her first-order desires. The second is the problem of manipulation. On Frankfurt's account of personal autonomy, a person would be autonomous with respect to a desire that was inculcated into him or her by another provided that the volitional endorsement of this desire was inculcated also—and yet such manipulation is inimical to autonomy. Finally, there is the regress-cum-incompleteness objection: why should a person be automatically held to be autonomous with respect to his or her volitional endorsements? If the answer is that he or she needs to endorse them to be autonomous with respect to them, a

regress ensues, for the same question will arise at this higher level of endorsement. If, however, a person is autonomous with respect to his or her volitions for some other reason, then the original hierarchical account of autonomy is incomplete. These problems with the hierarchical account of autonomy have led to it being refined for use in political philosophy, for example, by requiring that a person be autonomous with respect to a desire only if he or she would not have repudiated it during its development.

James Stacey Taylor

See also [Anarchism](#); [Legitimacy](#); [Liberalism](#); [Multiculturalism](#); [Pluralism](#); [Power](#)

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B

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Babeuf, Gracchus

Babeuf, Gracchus

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Babeuf, Gracchus

François-Noël Babeuf, called Gracchus (1760–97), was a journalist and political activist during the French Revolution. Radicalized by its events, he championed a variety of causes along the way: agrarian land reform, the economic interests of the urban poor, a system of distributive communism, and finally a plot for an insurrection calculated to make his egalitarian ideal a reality. For the last among these, he would become a legendary hero for the nineteenth-century French revolutionary tradition.

Some biographers portray Babeuf as a precursor of Karl Marx and see his ideas about communist theory and practice largely formed by the outset of the Revolution. But Babeuf hailed from a rural milieu, and his first writings and initiatives for reform were closely tied to the practical needs of the peasantry for tax relief and land reform. He was born into a large family of modest means in small-town Picardy, and he followed his father into the old regime system of tax farming, working as an accountant for landowners seeking more efficient means to collect ancient feudal dues. He came to find the system repugnant in its exploitation of small-scale farmers with few resources. With the coming of the Revolution in 1789, he became their advocate in a call for equitable tax reform.

During the early years of the Revolution, 1789 to 1792, Babeuf mixed energetically in local politics, both as journalist and as representative in the general council of the department of the Somme. Implicated in a fraudulent land sale scheme, he decamped to Paris in late 1792, where he wrote and

spoke in behalf of the consumerist complaints of the *sans culottes* (shopkeepers, artisans, and laborers) about the high cost of living. About this time, he adopted the pen name Gracchus, in emulation of Gaius Gracchus, tribune of the plebeians in the ancient Roman Republic.

As journalist, orator, and minor municipal official, Babeuf moved within the shifting political alliances of the radical republican clubs of Paris and acquired a reputation as an intrepid spokesman for popular democracy. With the fall from power of Maximilien Robespierre and the ensuing Thermadorian reaction in late 1794, he grew suspicious of the authoritarian drift of the Convention and of the cynical opportunism of its successor in late 1795, the Directory. For them, Babeuf became a bothersome agitator, and he was imprisoned periodically for the excesses of his journalistic polemics. In prison, he mixed with like-minded political dissidents and was emboldened to formulate a scheme for distributive communism. Money would be abolished. Producers, artisans, and farmers alike would bring their wares to central storehouses, where administrators would parcel them out to all citizens in equal measure.

Sensing that the Directory was betraying the republican ideal, Babeuf in 1796 threw in his lot with the Conspiracy of Equals, a secret society dedicated to inciting a popular insurrection to overthrow and displace it. Participants conceived of themselves as a revolutionary vanguard that would oversee the construction of a new regime based on egalitarian principles. Quixotically conceived and hastily organized, their plot was discovered, and Babeuf and his coconspirators were tried for treason before the high court at Vendôme in spring 1797. Babeuf defended his cause with candor and courage. Convicted and sentenced to death, he was guillotined on May 27, 1797.

Despite the variety of causes that he sought to advance over the course of the Revolution, Babeuf's legacy has come to be identified with his martyrdom for the communist-inspired insurrectionary plot of his last days. Thanks in part to a tract later written by his coconspirator Filippo Buonarroti eulogizing the conspiracy and Babeuf's visionary role within it, Babeuf would inspire insurgents of the nineteenth-century French

revolutionary tradition to emulate his militancy, notably the renowned insurrectionist Louis-Auguste Blanqui.

Babeuf's ideas were a mix of practical politics and his reading of the democratic philosophers of the Enlightenment, notably the ideas of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Denis Diderot, and Gabriel Bonnot de Mably. His sustaining interest throughout the Revolution was to create conditions that would ensure the economic and social well-being of all citizens. His conception of the good society was founded on moral rather than on economic principles and favored direct democracy (including the enfranchisement of women). His attention to social responsibility and economic planning was closer to the utopian socialists than it was to Marx. Arguably, his ideals anticipated those of the twentieth-century welfare state of the Western democracies more so than the state-sponsored collectivism of the Soviet Union.

Patrick H. Hutton

See also [Blanqui, Louis-Auguste](#); [Communism, Varieties of](#); [Equality and Egalitarianism](#); [French Political Thought](#); [French Revolution, Political Thought of the](#); [Property, Theories of](#); [Revolution](#); [Socialism](#); [Utopianism](#); [Welfare State, Theories of the](#)

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Phyllis L. Soybel Phyllis L. Soybel

Bagehot, Walter

Bagehot, Walter

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Bagehot, Walter

Walter Bagehot (1826–77) was an essayist, writer, and editor whose legacy includes a notable explication of the evolution of the English constitutional system, a concise analysis of the rise of England’s financial position in the mid-Victorian period, and a clear connection between the English and Continental developments in modern, empirical ideas of how to research and write in the social sciences. Bagehot was, as historian Asa Briggs wrote, “An observer . . . clever, at times, cynical,” but someone who led his readers “into the heart of mid-Victorian society” (Briggs 1954, 115). An essayist, writer, and editor, Bagehot helped to explain his age to his own society and enables the current reader to understand it.

Born in Langport, Somerset, Bagehot grew up in comfortable surroundings, the son of a banker with an intellectual bent. This leaning was reflected in Bagehot’s own studies as a student at Bristol College where he became interested in anthropology. Four years at University College London introduced him to free trade ideas and Chartist arguments. Although originally trained as a lawyer, Bagehot followed his father into banking. For a number of years, he managed the London branch of Stuckey and Co., working on the very street that would become the source of one of his most important books, *Lombard Street: A Description of the Money Market* (1873).

In 1857, Bagehot married the daughter of Sir James Wilson, one of the first editors of *The Economist*, today one of the most influential news magazines

in the world. Wilson, a secretary for the treasury and later secretary for finance for India, introduced Bagehot to the political center of the British Empire. This introduction began the younger man's education and became the source for much of his writings. Upon Wilson's death in 1861, Bagehot became editor of *The Economist*, writing several articles and expanding its coverage to include more politics and coverage of the United States. Bagehot would remain in this influential role until his own death in 1877.

Although known primarily as a writer, Bagehot had parliamentary aspirations. He ran unsuccessfully as a Liberal four times for constituencies as diverse as Manchester and University College, London. Unfortunately for Bagehot, he was neither a Liberal nor a Tory, explaining that he was "between sizes in politics." As a liberal, he accepted "the march of improvement" of the nineteenth century, but remained essentially conservative enough to "believe that reforms should be carried" far enough to maintain stability but not to "generate an accelerating demand for further change" (Briggs 1954, 113). Hence, he was not orthodox enough for either party, despite his desire to serve in Parliament. His failure to become a member of Parliament remained a disappointment.

He is noted for three highly influential books, along with numerous articles and essays in *The Economist*. His first book, *The English Constitution* (originally published 1867) was a clear analysis of the development of the English Constitution, explaining the purpose for keeping such symbols as the monarchy, which had come under attack as Queen Victoria retreated into isolation following the death of Prince Albert. Bagehot believed that the importance of the monarchy was not in its actual power, but rather in its "symbolic and emotional significance" (Bagehot quoted in Thomson [1950] 1991, 171). *The English Constitution* has become an essential on the reading list of any historian specializing in Victorian England. Bagehot's second book, *Physics and Politics: Thoughts on the Application of Natural Selection and Inheritance in Political Societies* ([1872] 1948) connected Charles Darwin's theories on the survival of the fittest and on natural selection to the political realm. One of Bagehot's major contributions was the application of scientific methodology, as adapted from the physical sciences, to political evolution. (Thomson [1950] 1991, 105) In *Physics and Politics*, Bagehot wrote of the forces that provide survival value in a

society, arguing that “spirit of conformity and social discipline, the ‘legal fibre’ which holds society together” does create stability, but this “cake of custom” as Bagehot referred to it gets broken. This evolution actually leads to discussion and change (quoted in Thomson [1950] 1991, 105).

The last book Bagehot completed was his work on the rise of English financial preeminence in the nineteenth century. In *Lombard Street* (1873) Bagehot called upon his experience both as a banker and an underwriter for Lloyds of London. He commented upon London’s assumption of the title of “sole great selling house of exchange transactions in Europe” following the collapse of the Second French Republic, referring to it as an “odd kind of authority” (Bagehot quoted in Thomson [1950] 1991, 141).

Phyllis L. Soybel

See also [Constitutionalism](#); [Darwinism and Social Darwinism](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Liberalism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Progress](#)

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Paul McLaughlin Paul McLaughlin

Bakunin, Michael

Bakunin, Michael

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Bakunin, Michael

Along with Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and Peter A. Kropotkin, Michael Bakunin (1814–76) is generally ranked among the major theorists of anarchism in the nineteenth century. Best known for his political disputes with Karl Marx in the First International, Bakunin's brand of non-Marxist or libertarian socialism has influenced political thinkers from Emma Goldman to Noam Chomsky.

Life

Born on May 18, 1814, Bakunin was raised in central Russia, attended military school as an adolescent in St. Petersburg, and then, after a brief military career, began studying philosophy in Moscow in 1836. His philosophical influences were primarily from the tradition of German Idealism. Originally he was drawn to the subjective idealism of Johann Gottlieb Fichte; later, and more significantly, he concentrated on the absolute idealism of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. In 1840 Bakunin went to Berlin, intending to advance his academic career. Ultimately, however, he became politically radicalized in Prussia (and subsequently Saxony) under the influence of the so-called Young Hegelians, a group of philosophers who interpreted Hegel's philosophy in an unorthodox and theologically and politically left-wing fashion. This group included Marx, Friedrich Engels, and other lesser historical lights such as Bruno Bauer, Ludwig Feuerbach, and Arnold Ruge. The most striking expression of Bakunin's radicalism

from this period was “The Reaction in Germany” (1842), an article in which he advocated the revolutionary overthrow of existing social conditions by the poor in the name of democracy and freedom.

Faced with increased repression, numerous German radicals of this period gravitated toward Switzerland and France. Bakunin arrived in Paris, via Switzerland, in early 1844. There he met the two major influences on the development of his mature political theory, Marx and Proudhon, the French socialist and early anarchist. During the Revolutions of 1848 Bakunin engaged in revolutionary activity in central Europe: in Breslau, Prague, and finally, Dresden. Between Prague and Dresden, he wrote his next significant work, “An Appeal to the Slavs” (1848), in which he supported pan-Slavic revolution and a federation of European republics.

Imprisoned by Saxon and Austrian authorities for his revolutionary activities, Bakunin was returned to Russia after two years to spend the next six years in prison and the remainder of his life in Siberian exile. However, he contrived to escape in mid-1861, traveling to England through Japan and the United States. In London, Bakunin reacquainted himself with Marx but spurned his invitation to join the First International in 1864, preferring to move to Italy in search of revolutionary activity. It was during his three years there that Bakunin first formulated his anarchist theory, which was initially outlined in his influential “Revolutionary Catechism” (1866). In Italy, he also established a number of secret revolutionary organizations of rather limited impact and much debated intent.

Bakunin spent most of the remainder of his life, from mid-1867, in Switzerland, penning his major theoretical works of anarchism there. From his Swiss base, he also attempted to propagate anarchist ideas within the organized socialist movement, having been admitted to the First International in 1868. This effort led to significant hostility from Marx and his followers, who responded by publicly questioning both Bakunin’s commitment to internationalism (accusing him of being a pan-Slavist as he had been some years earlier) and his commitment to social revolution (accusing of him of advocating terrorism, owing to his controversial association with Sergei Nechaev, the young Russian nihilist). In spite of these accusations, Bakunin’s form of anarchism was gaining supporters, not

least in the southern European sections of the First International. Owing to such ideological divisions and hostilities, as well as prevailing political conditions after the defeat of the Paris Commune in 1871, the First International effectively collapsed at the Hague congress in 1872, when Marx and Engels engineered Bakunin's expulsion from the organization and had its General Council transferred from London to New York. The First International officially ended in 1876.

Aside from his involvement in a failed popular uprising in Lyon in late 1870 and an aborted attempt to participate in an insurrection in Bologna in mid-1874, Bakunin spent most of his final years in increasingly bitter dispute with Marxist opponents and in coping with health and financial problems. He died in Bern on July 1, 1876.

Political Thought

In addition to numerous shorter writings, Bakunin developed his mature political theory in three principal works: *Federalism, Socialism, and Anti-Theologism* (1867), *The Knouto-Germanic Empire and the Social Revolution* (1870–72), and *Statism and Anarchy* (1873). (To date, only the third of these works has been adequately translated into English; see Bakunin [1873] 1990.) Among these works, the longest and most important, certainly from a strictly theoretical perspective, is the unfinished *Knouto-Germanic Empire*, written during the Franco-Prussian War, the Paris Commune, the collapse of the First International, and the aftermath of these events. Unpublished during Bakunin's lifetime, this work is composed of two parts, two substantial appendices, a preface and lengthy note to the second part, and various other fragments. As such composition would suggest, it is imperfectly constructed and generally unpolished. Nevertheless, the *Knouto-Germanic Empire* contains the best overall statement of Bakunin's position on three basic theoretical themes, all of which had been introduced in *Federalism, Socialism, and Anti-Theologism*; the first theme is critical, the second is constructive, and the third is transformative. The critical theme is the analysis of the state as a fundamental, perhaps the fundamental, feature of the existing social order. Its constructive theme is the negative characterization of anarchy as an alternative social order. And its transformative theme is the nature of a

social revolution that might bring about this alternative social order. In expounding upon all of these themes, Bakunin develops a social theory that contrasts markedly with that of Marx, though it is nevertheless heavily indebted to him. Bakunin's opposition to Marx is explicitly spelt out in *Knouto-Germanic Empire* in the second appendix, which is appropriately titled "An Essay against Marx" (1872). The criticisms contained in this appendix are elaborated—for the benefit of a Russian-speaking readership—in Bakunin's last major work, the aforementioned *Statism and Anarchy*.

On the critical side, then, Bakunin offers a definition, explanation, and evaluation of the state. The state is, he claims, a particular political form that society takes at a given moment in human history: a moment, crucially, that he takes to predate capitalism. He insists that it is not only a transitory rather than a permanent form, but also a form that is necessary for the development of human history to the present. Thus, it can be said to be a "*historically* necessary evil" but not a "necessary evil" for the very existence of social order, as certain liberals might argue. (What makes it evil will come into view shortly.) Historically speaking, Bakunin claims that the state was founded by violence and conquest. Indeed, a necessary condition for its continued existence is force or coercion under the threat of force. However, Bakunin acknowledges that force is not a sufficient condition for its continued existence, nor is it what he represents as the Machiavellian wisdom of those who control the state. Another necessary condition for the continued existence of the state is a particular kind of belief on the part of its subjects: namely, belief in its authority or belief that its imposed influence is rightful. What largely interests Bakunin in the *Knouto-Germanic Empire* is the origin of such belief. Thus, what he offers is a genetico-critical examination of political authority, specifically that of the state. He argues that the state's authority—or the belief of its subjects in its authority—derives from religious and other similar systems of idealistic belief. He traces a historical line of development from religious belief in God, which represents the principle of absolute authority, through the institutionalization of religious belief in the church, which represents the principle of spiritual authority, to the politicization of society in the state, which represents the principle of temporal authority. Ultimately, he claims that the state could not exist, could not have arisen in human history, without religion—that is, without the moral sanction for its violence and

coercion provided by God, either directly, as in Protestantism, or indirectly, as in Catholicism. What the Reformation represented from this point of view was a challenge to the intermediate element, the church, such that the temporal authority of the state subsequently derived directly from God. The Enlightenment, by contrast, undermined religious belief itself and consequently the very principle of authority. Bakunin notes that it has, therefore, become increasingly difficult in the wake of the Enlightenment to defend authority in the absence of an absolute foundation or God, though modern political theorists still attempt to do so, albeit in more limited or more liberal forms and in the name of other, less secure idealistic abstractions such as the public interest and political freedom.

Assuming that the persistence of the state is based, in part, on the unfortunate beliefs—on the ignorance—of its subjects, one might wonder what social purpose the state serves. Is the state's supposedly rightful violence and coercion merely for the sake of violence and coercion? Not according to Bakunin, who maintains that the inherently violent state continues to exist so as to guarantee the ongoing exploitation of one part of society by another. The contemporary state, the state in the postrevolutionary period in Europe, guarantees the ongoing exploitation of the proletariat and the peasantry by the bourgeoisie. The contemporary state, though not the state as such, is therefore a reflection of social relations under capitalism. It constitutes the violent and coercive oppression of the proletariat and the peasantry by the bourgeoisie on behalf of exploitative interests and generally through its parliamentary representatives. A challenge to the state would constitute a challenge not only to political oppression but also to the economic exploitation that this political oppression guarantees: this political-economic link is the sense in which Bakunin's anarchism is socialist.

The typical reaction to Bakunin's criticism of the oppressive state is to say that there are or might be other less oppressive, more representative, more rational, and more humane forms of state, as for example in liberal democracies or scientific socialisms. But Bakunin asserts a basic anarchist principle of the formal equivalence of states. Whether a state is a monarchy or a republic, an aristocracy or a democracy, permanent or transitional, it remains a state—that is, by definition for Bakunin, a violent and coercive

institution that gives one part of society the opportunity to oppress and exploit another part of society and that depends on the ignorance of the oppressed in order for it to survive. The state is, therefore, an institution that opposes both freedom and rationality, that frustrates the human capacities for both creative action and critical reflection, and that therefore prevents human happiness. Thus the state is fundamentally unjust.

On ethical grounds, Bakunin's anarchism rejects not only the state, but also external authority of which the political authority of the state is only the most important example. External authority is a form of influence or social power that is imposed by one party on another party and that is recognized as rightful by the other party. Social relations of this authoritative kind are, according to Bakunin, unfree and irrational and therefore ethically unacceptable. However, Bakunin's anarchism does not reject natural authority such as that of the theoretical or technical expert, which is ethically defensible. The natural authority of one party may be freely accepted by another party but remains subject to its critical judgment. Such authority is genuinely consensual and temporary. Social relations of this authoritative kind are, according to Bakunin, free and rational and therefore ethically acceptable.

On the constructive side, Bakunin has somewhat less to say in the *Knouto-Germanic Empire*. His remarks on an alternative anarchist society comprise some relatively abstract ethico-political claims about the nature of freedom in such a society, as well as some more concrete, though still rather general, socioeconomic claims about anarchy. Bakunin also claims that anarchy is a social condition of individual freedom—that is, a society in which individuals realize their freedom in solidarity and equality with other individuals. There are, he adds, three aspects of the realization of such freedom, the first of which is positive, the second and third of which are negative. The positive aspect is the full exercise and cultivation of all human capacities by all members of society through education, science, and material well-being, social conditions that require individual and collective labor, both physical and intellectual. The first negative aspect is the rejection of those superstitious, religious, and idealistic beliefs that constitute the basis of external authority, both spiritual and temporal. Such rejection is required in order to secure human rationality. The second

negative aspect is the rejection of external authority as such, especially the political authority of the state. This rejection is required in order to secure a minimum of human freedom.

While Bakunin's more concrete socioeconomic claims are substantiated to some degree in his programmatic writings of the same period, he is generally reluctant to speculate on the form that the future society might take, regarding such speculation as unscientific, overly prescriptive, and therefore restrictive of the freedom of those who are to shape the society according to the needs of their time and place. From his "scientific" perspective, the most that can be said of a desirable future social order is what it will not be like, and this negative vision by known facts about the present social order and by our judgments of their undesirability. So if x is the case in our society, and x is judged to be undesirable, then all other things being equal, x will not be the case in the desirable society of the future. Given that existing society is oppressive and exploitative, organized from the top down by the state and marked by private ownership of the means of production, wage slavery, and class conflict, we can at least claim that the desirable future social order will not be any of these things. To put the same point in somewhat more speculative terms, an anarchist society would be stateless and socialist, organized from the bottom up by workers who federate into unions, communes, regions, nations, and ultimately global society, and marked by collective ownership of the means of production, voluntary labor, and classlessness.

On the transformative side, finally, Bakunin makes at least three claims in the *Knouto-Germanic Empire* that distinguish his position from that of Marx: first, with respect to the objective of social revolution; second, with respect to the possibility of social revolution; and third, with respect to the agents of social revolution. The objective of Bakunin's anarchist social revolution differs from that of Marx primarily in terms of its statelessness, though it may also differ to a lesser degree in terms of distributive principles that are collectivist rather than communist, and based upon effort rather than need. In other words, Bakunin believes that a social revolution requires the abolition of the state, not the proletarian conquest of political power to establish a transitional dictatorship. Indeed, the latter is no social revolution at all, according to Bakunin: it is a mere political revolution or

transfer of political power from the bourgeoisie to the proletariat, a transfer that still gives one part of society the corrupting opportunity to oppress and exploit another part.

Regarding the possibility of social revolution, Bakunin maintains that two conditions are necessary, and together seemingly sufficient. The first of these conditions is the reality of objective sociohistorical circumstances: social revolution cannot occur without a given material basis, without a certain level of economic and perhaps political development within a society that is divided along lines of class. It cannot occur by a mere act of will. However, Bakunin disagrees with a view that he falsely attributes to Marx that the subjective condition is irrelevant. The second necessary condition for social revolution is, Bakunin maintains, the reality of a revolutionary will: social revolution cannot occur without the sincere desire of a particular class to transform a society seen as unjust. This revolutionary will is the expression of a will that is largely though not entirely determined by social circumstances. Thus, Bakunin argues for a relative, not absolute, freedom of will and moral responsibility.

For Marx, the main agents of social revolution are the proletariat, the class of urban, industrial workers. By contrast, Bakunin believes that two other classes have a revolutionary role to play: the peasantry, the class of rural, small-scale land owners and laborers, and the lumpenproletariat, the underclass of beggars, criminals, and the unemployed or even the unemployable. The unemployables have revolutionary potential because they have no vested interest whatsoever in maintaining the existing social order and potentially everything to gain through fundamental social change. The peasantry, by contrast, may appear to have a vested interest in maintaining the existing social order: it has something to lose through fundamental social change, namely, the right to its private property in land, as well as the moral respectability that goes with ownership in capitalist society. However, Bakunin argues, the peasantry is in fact sinking into the proletariat and therefore stands to gain much from fundamental social change.

Though elements of Bakunin's political theory—arguably including his class analysis—are time-specific and arguably applicable only to

nineteenth-century European society, other elements—including his critical analysis of the state and his constructive ideas on federalism—have remained relevant to those with a theoretical and practical interest in non-Marxist forms of socialism.

Paul McLaughlin

See also [Anarchism](#); [Communism](#), [Varieties of](#); [Federalism](#); [Hegelianism](#); [Individualism](#); [Kropotkin, Peter A.](#); [Libertarianism](#); [Liberty](#), [Theories of](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Proudhon, Pierre-Joseph](#); [Revolution](#); [Russian Political Thought](#); [Socialism](#); [State](#), [Theories of the](#)

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Olivier Dard Olivier Dard

Barrès, Maurice

Barrès, Maurice

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Barrès, Maurice

Along with Charles Maurras (1868–1952), Maurice Barrès (1862–1923) was one of the major theoreticians of contemporary French nationalism. He was an aggressively engaged political journalist (from *La Cocarde* to *Figaro* and later *l'Echo de Paris*): elected to the Chamber of Deputies for the first time in 1889 (then from 1906 to 1923) and established as a political leader when he succeeded Paul Déroulède as president of the League of Patriots on July 10, 1914. His relationship to the political is a key indicator to understanding his life; however, neither that relationship nor his relationship to nationalism can fully capture it.

Barrès was first and foremost a writer. Using literature, he quickly established himself as an authority figure and was deemed the “prince of youth” by his contemporaries, despite the fact that he had not yet reached the age of thirty. Singled out after his first review *Les Taches d'encre*, he was best known as the author of the three-volume series *Culte du moi*, published between 1888 and 1891 (1994). This series earned him a following among the youth of his time and literary recognition among his peers and critics. Barrès was at the vanguard of literature, but he also maintained a desire to shape his own identity: the “I” is key in Barrès’s work. Alongside his literary debut, Barrès launched into political combat at a time when nationalism was personified by the figure of General Georges Boulanger, the War Minister who was further distancing himself from a Third Republic whose foreign policy he judged far too timid.

Barrès the Lorrainer, born in Charmes in the south of Nancy, was an ardent supporter of nationalist efforts to regain Alsace Lorraine, lost to Germany in the Treaty of Frankfurt following the Franco-Prussian War, and he rejected the Third Republic's parliamentarism. Anxious to find a path toward the synthesis of nationalism and socialism, he embodied what Zeev Sternhell has called the "revolutionary right." This stage of national socialism was essential to Barrès's work and extends beyond the Boulangist episode. Indeed, Barrès marked nationalism with a style of writing that could be considered lampoonist at times, most notably during the scandals that arose in connection with French involvement in the financing of the Panama Canal. At the same time, he was intent on elaborating an ideological synthesis by launching the newspaper *La Cocarde*, which attracted socialists and a young up-and-comer, Charles Maurras.

The Dreyfus Affair, in which a Jewish French officer was falsely convicted of spying for Germany, was another key moment in Barrès's trajectory. Like all nationalists, he was fiercely hostile to both Dreyfus and his supporters, while simultaneously exalting the role and the necessity of the army. At the turn of the twentieth century, Barrès's literary corpus emerged as nationalist through a new series, *Le Roman de l'énergie nationale*, of which the first volume was titled *Les Déracinés*. Through his Lorraine roots and the sacred hill, Barrès glorified the earth and the dead and decried the decadence that was threatening France.

A dedicated writer who was elected to the Académie française in 1906, Barrès was at the forefront of the nationalist struggles of his time, many of which were recounted in a weighty tome, *Scènes et doctrines du nationalisme*. While Barrès was a close and faithful friend to Maurras, he did not follow when Maurras and Action Française proclaimed the need to bring down the Republic in order to reestablish the monarchy. Barrès loathed parliamentarism and its abuses, denouncing with particular virulence the corruption scandals of his time (he published *Dans le cloaque* about the Rochette affair, in which French officials were charged with complicity in fraud committed by M. Rochette); nevertheless, he remained a son of the French Revolution, campaigning for a Republic tinged with Caesarism and Bonapartism.

The Barrès of pre–World War I did not budge on revenge nationalism and wrote a trilogy titled *Les Bastions de l’Est*. During the war, Barrès was a strong proponent of the Union sacrée and of the coalition. If he had hated pacifists accused of treason, the anti-Dreyfusard now gave special prominence to Jews in his work *Les diverses familles spirituelles de la France*. Times had changed, and henceforth Barrès would combine nationalism, conservatism, and notabilization. A striking figure of the French political and cultural landscape, well known and influential outside of France—even if it was more for his literary works than his political texts—Barrès remained a solitary man. Unlike Maurras, he did not seek disciples or to create a following. Shortly after his death, Henri de Montherlant remarked, “Barrès is slipping away.” This observation is accurate and refers to his broader lack of posterity—even if some of his books have been republished, and even if he figures prominently in the history of French nationalism.

Olivier Dard

See also [Conservatism](#); [Ethnicity and Political Thought](#); [French Political Thought](#); [Nationalism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [State, Theories of the](#)

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Douglas Moggach Douglas Moggach

Bauer, Bruno

Bauer, Bruno

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Bauer, Bruno

Bruno Bauer (born in Eisenberg, Thuringia, 1809; died in Berlin, 1882) was a student of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, a leader of the Young Hegelians before the Revolutions of 1848, and a theologian, historian, and philosopher. His major works include *Critique of the Synoptic Gospels* (3 vols., 1841–42); anonymously, the mock-pietistic *Trumpet of the Last Judgement upon Hegel, Atheist and Antichrist* (1841); *Christianity Revealed* (1843); and multivolume histories of the French Revolution. In 1842, he was dismissed from the University of Bonn, allegedly for religious heterodoxy but directly on the order of the Prussian king Friedrich Wilhelm IV for public criticisms of the regime.

In his theological investigations, Bauer concluded that the gospel accounts were purely fictitious, and he denied the historical existence of Jesus. Bauer criticized Christianity on theoretical and historical grounds, seeing it as a product of alienated consciousness and a support for oppressive, irrational political institutions. In his historical works on the Enlightenment and French Revolution, Bauer examined the transitions from the old social order of estates to more individualistic modern civil society. While he viewed this development as necessary and progressive, he also warned of its dangers: the emergence of conformist mass society. His philosophical reflections before 1848 focused on concepts of freedom. He drew republican conclusions from Hegel's theory of the state and criticized vacillations in Hegel's own account of sovereignty. His position conflicted with leading liberal and democratic views, however, when in 1843, he opposed the

emancipation of Prussian Jews as a mere defense of particular interests. He was the object of Karl Marx's polemics in the *Holy Family* and the *German Ideology*. Max Stirner's *The Ego and His Own* (1845) was largely a critique of Bauer's republican humanism. After 1848, Bauer became a theorist of emergent world imperialism.

Revising Hegel's conception of Absolute Spirit, Bauer saw art as closer to philosophy than religion. Both art and philosophy manifested the creative power of the human spirit to transform the objective world in light of ideas while religion was an expression of passivity and alienation. Unlike Enlightenment atheism, which described religion as mere duplicity, Bauer saw religious alienation as a historically necessary, though now obsolete, step toward full human self-determination. The Christian idea of the unity of God and man conveyed an essential historical truth: individuals were capable of rational freedom, progressively transforming themselves and their world. But Christianity distorted this idea, projecting a separate heavenly realm where universal and particular, God and man, were reconciled. Far from correcting the egoism of human life, this idea of transcendent divinity confirmed it. When the universality of human consciousness was projected into an otherworldly beyond, its residue was a merely particularistic understanding of freedom as exclusively private interest. Religion and political absolutism were mutually sustaining forms of alienation. Bauer's alternative, before 1848, was a republican state based on universal self-consciousness: the capacity of individuals to realize general interests in their own activities, rather than acting on narrowly defined utility or self-interest, and to disavow immediate interests and identities wherever these conflicted with higher, self-determined aims. Bauer's opposition to Jewish emancipation arose from his critique of particularism. The explicitly Christian state of Restoration Prussia could not emancipate its Jewish subjects without undermining its own foundation; and the Jews were seen to be demanding freedom on the basis of their private religious identity. The genuine solution was the mutual renunciation of religion.

In his 1843 critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, Marx modified Bauer's analysis of alienation, arguing that even republican states were false universals sustaining egoism in social life. The solution was to transform

economic relations themselves. Bauer, however, rejected socialism as the advocacy of particular interests. In 1848, he defended popular sovereignty and the right to revolution, demanding that a new constitution be promulgated as an act of revolutionary will, not as a concession from the king.

While denying that his thinking changed, Bauer abandoned republicanism after the failure of 1848. He predicted global imperialism, the rise of Russia, European union, and inevitable world war. He did not endorse Bismarckian absolutism, but anticipating Friedrich Nietzsche, saw in the impending collapse of Europe's prospects for a cultural renaissance, freed from traditional values and religion. Some Nazi authors claimed him as a precursor because of anti-Semitism in his late writings, though he was never a German nationalist. The socialist Karl Kautsky developed Bauer's views on imperialism into a more optimistic conception of a peaceful world order. Friedrich Engels praised Bauer's theoretical contributions to the socialist critique of religion. Along with his early republican, theological, and historical reflections, Bauer's heritage is thus contradictory and complex.

Douglas Moggach

See also [Engels, Friedrich](#); [Empire and Political Thought](#); [Ethnicity and Political Thought](#); [Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich](#); [Hegelianism](#); [Kautsky, Karl](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [National Socialism](#); [Nationalism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Radicalism](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Republicanism](#); [Young Hegelians](#)

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Gary Roth Gary Roth

Bebel, August

Bebel, August

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Bebel, August

No other individual was as effective a proponent of Marxian socialism during the late 1800s as August Bebel (1840–1913). Widely popular within the German labor movement, his public engagements typically drew overflow audiences, and his major publications were reprinted each time they sold out. Bebel's most original contribution to socialist theory centered on his writings about women's equality. His involvement with this issue began in the mid-1860s, around the same time as his participation in the socialist movement. From this point forward, he became a tireless advocate for women, mostly with considerable support from within the socialist movement itself. His book *Women and Socialism* ([1885] 1988) was widely reproduced. With over fifty reprintings in Germany alone that comprised eight separate editions, it ultimately tripled in length. The book was also translated into twenty other languages during Bebel's lifetime. In other words, virtually every country or linguistic enclave that had a socialist movement also had a version of his book for its supporters to read and learn from.

Bebel was raised in a small town in the western part of Germany. His formal education ended at age 14 when he was apprenticed as a woodworker. Bebel was drawn into the socialist movement reluctantly, but once convinced of its goals and doctrines, he dedicated much of his adult life to its success. At first, he belonged to the Leipzig Worker Educational Association, one of the many self-help groups that formed during the 1850s and 1860s. The association focused on practical skills and core knowledge,

such as public speaking, note taking, and mathematics, and on leisure-time activities such as hiking and gymnastics.

These all-male and apolitical groups were places of discussion and controversy. Their radical members were intent on jettisoning the educational focus for a real involvement in political matters, a transformation that Bebel resisted at first. Not until he was introduced to Marxian socialism by the freelance journalist and agitator Wilhelm Liebknecht did Bebel perceive a means to combine education and emancipation into a single philosophy. Marxian socialism appealed to him because it confirmed rather than criticized the activities of which he was already a part.

Marxism quickly became known for its fierce independence and its refusal to cooperate with groups from outside the working class. It was also highly political, with a strong focus on elections and governmental power. This combination of traits attracted Bebel at a time when the modern labor movement in continental Europe was just forming. In the next few years in Germany, the radical wing of the workers' movement (the so-called Lassalleans, after their lead theorist, orator, and organizer, Ferdinand Lassalle) was absorbed into the Marxian socialist movement, as the latter proved to be more consistent in its activities and better able to attract support within working-class circles.

The Socialist Movement

Bebel became well known not only within the German labor movement, but also by the population at large. By 1877, the German socialists (or Social Democrats—the official title of the party was the German Social Democratic Party) polled nearly 10 percent of the national electorate. With a membership of 35,000 and publishing over forty newspapers, including thirteen dailies, the socialists were a formidable force. Membership in the party and in the affiliated socialist unions was entirely voluntary. There were no automatic paycheck deductions in an era when everyone was paid in cash. Dues collections took place at neighborhood pubs, at regularly scheduled meetings, or in the case of the unions, in unauthorized campaigns at the workplace.

So successful had the Social Democrats been during their first decade of existence that the government banned the party in 1878. The repression was intense. Bebel had spent several years in jail during the 1870s, and these stays were now followed by two additional stints during the 1880s.

Altogether he would spend four and one-half years in prison for matters such as insulting the monarch, distributing unapproved leaflets, denouncing militarism, and treason. During the twelve years of the Anti-Socialist Laws, hundreds of socialist groups were banned, publications forbidden or seized, and additional hundreds of individuals exiled or jailed, all while the movement led an underground and shadowy existence. Bebel was compelled to leave his residence in the city of Leipzig and move to its suburbs, although many others needed to flee the country altogether.

Loopholes in the Anti-Socialist Laws, however, allowed individual socialists to campaign for office, Bebel among them. Election to a governmental body also meant that speeches and proclamations given within official chambers could be reprinted and distributed as campaign literature, another feature that played to Bebel's strengths. The repressive legislation seemed to have the opposite effect from what was intended. By 1890, the party had doubled in size and now polled 20 percent of the electorate. Because of another quirk in the electoral rules, Bebel was often a candidate in multiple districts, especially in those where a strong local candidate and party organization had yet to emerge.

What were the main tenets of socialist doctrine that Bebel so thoroughly identified with? Foremost among them was the transformation of private property into collective custody. By private property, the socialists meant not so much items used for individual consumption and well-being (although in the case of the rich, these too were an issue), but the resources used to produce commodities. The target of their socialization plans were natural resources such as agricultural land and mines and productive equipment such as machinery, factory buildings, transportation facilities, and the like. In other words, anything that people either depended on or used in common would be removed from the control of individuals and small groups. A thoroughgoing democratization in all areas of society would take its place.

Naturally, the socialists favored a redistribution of wealth from the rich toward the poor, with a special emphasis on the elimination of inequalities. They opposed all forms of discrimination. The freedoms of speech, assembly, and organization were vital, and they also advocated the freedom of religious choice and practice. Free and universal education, the right to legal counsel, a progressive taxation system, shorter workdays with regular time off, the abolition of child labor, restrictive provisions for work that was potentially dangerous to one's health, elected workplace inspectors, a rigorous system of public health measures, public oversight of insurance companies, the abolition of the monarchy and other forms of hereditary rule, and the equal and secret ballot were what they strove for. Some of these ideas, of course, are now recognizable as part of the liberal state. But the socialists were forerunners in their endeavors to reform the modern world, and much of their platform still remains unfulfilled, or fulfilled in a less than satisfactory manner.

Women and Socialism

Bebel's physical appearance belied the great power of his words. Slight in appearance and standing only five feet six inches in height, he would sometimes talk for several consecutive hours in large meeting halls abuzz with commentary called out from the audience and a great flow of people into and out of the room. Bebel also wrote in a manner similar to his speaking style, a dialogic method in which the mode of communication was as important as the content of his ideas. Whether speaking or writing, he always attempted to engage the audience as if in conversation. This ability to articulate what many were thinking and explain what many questioned accounts for his great popularity. He was the conduit for the spread of socialist ideas among the German proletariat, many of whom identified with his humble background and greatly appreciated his efforts to explain the fundamentals of socialist doctrine to them in terms readily understandable.

Particularly noteworthy was Bebel's sponsorship and encouragement of women colleagues. The socialist movement, though, was overwhelmingly male, in part because women were legally banned from political participation, even at lectures, in most parts of Germany. The movement recruited its members from the skilled crafts and from heavy industry, both

of which were areas where women were excluded from employment. Bebel had been an organizer in the late 1860s of a workplace union in the textile industry that recruited male and female members. This experience may have been the first union anywhere to operate in such a fashion. Textiles at that time were produced in an array of places that included sizable factories, small workshops, and the so-called cottage industry where adults and children worked at home in ad hoc arrangements and great poverty. The union-affiliated insurance companies provided benefits for childbirth and other gynecological conditions, another pioneering practice by the fledgling socialist movement. But the textile industry was an exception to the general pattern of paid labor, which was oriented on men.

A significant part of the German working class supported the drive for women's equality. Within the socialist milieu, several hundreds of thousands of men espoused women's legal and political equality, sponsored special elections to ensure female representatives, and funded all-women's newspapers and publications. Feminism was as much a men's as it was a women's issue. Socialist men were often quite expansive in their understanding of women's equality. In this they took their lead from Bebel, whose *Women and Socialism* discussed the plight of women from a broad array of political, economic, sociological, and psychological perspectives. The list of topics that he covered was encyclopedic in scope: fertility rates, sex-segregated occupations, morality and romance, male theories of women, job discrimination, collective households, equal rights and equal pay, and much more. Especially risqué were his frank and open comments about sexuality.

Bebel's book found an avid readership among working-class and middle-class women and among working-class men. *Women and Socialism* was clearly one of the most widely distributed socialist books of the pre-World War I era. For many, it was the conduit into the socialist movement. Feminist activists often attributed their own political development to Bebel's influence. That he portrayed women as acting on their own behalf despite a societal system based on class and gender inequalities was one of the book's most appealing features, a trait quite exceptional for the era in which it was written. Within the socialist movement, *Women and Socialism* was considered the most authoritative book on women's equality, far

eclipsing in importance and recognition Friedrich Engels's *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*.

Women and Socialism was also a book full of quirks, some deriving from Bebel's odd writing habits, some from the book's translators. The first edition was a long, 180-page pamphlet that was published without chapter or section headings, an indication of Bebel's initial lack of familiarity with literary traditions. Subsequent editions were translated into English on three separate occasions during his lifetime, and each time the translators introduced sex-specific language into the text even though Bebel had been conscientious about avoiding it. Where Bebel referred to humankind, the translators substituted mankind.

But for all its organizational and idiosyncratic problems, *Women and Socialism* remained a book known for its bold discussions of everyday life. Bebel's advocacy in the Reichstag of women's right to initiate divorce proceedings was reflected in his book with passages on the economic hardships that faced single-headed households. His calls for the decriminalization of homosexuality were not openly endorsed by his own party, despite the many internal debates his stance prompted. A prolific writer of articles, pamphlets, speeches, and reports on a wide-range of current events and controversies, Bebel had a major impact on the activities and doctrines of the socialist movement.

Socialism at Its Limits

By the early 1900s, the socialist movement had begun to push against its own limitations. Industrial expansion had led to tremendous gains in productivity, and these gains translated into cheaper consumer goods—an era of deflation—from which the working class benefited. The economy was still highly volatile, with all the inequalities and instability of previous decades, but there was a sense of complacency and even satisfaction that mixed with all the other sentiments about the existing order of things. The more successful the socialist movement's organizations became, the more cautious they grew. With full-time employees in the party and affiliated unions now numbering in the thousands, there was a layer of the movement that derived its livelihood from its continued existence. The movement also

began to attract talented individuals, some of whom were university educated, from the lower middle and professional classes who shared a socialist perspective. Cast into the role of an elder statesman, Bebel's role in the party's parliamentary faction and his position as cochair of the entire party organization were accompanied by a certain marginalization.

Meantime, each national and regional election was scrutinized intensely by Bebel and his colleagues to determine if adjustments in tactics, rhetoric, and policy were necessary to secure votes and ensure success at the polls since this aspect was deemed essential to the forward progress of the entire movement. By 1912, the year before Bebel's death, the Social Democratic Party was the largest and most successful political organization in Germany. It counted one million members, with two and one-half million in socialist-affiliated unions. Party candidates had received one-third of the popular vote in the national elections, and one-fourth of all Reichstag representatives were now socialists. In the capital city of Berlin, a full three-fourths of the electorate voted socialist.

Despite these achievements, the party found itself in a quandary. On the one hand, it had never been more successful. Yet it was also clear that there was not much room for further growth within the electoral system. The Social Democrats would never achieve governmental power based on the working-class electorate alone, and this realization split the party into left- and right-wing factions. The left emphasized the revolutionary traditions of the socialist movement, whereas the right hoped to tone down these aspects in order to attract adherents from within the middle classes. Bebel tried to bridge this gap, but events outpaced his ability to forge a consensus. Increasingly he and others from the leadership of the Social Democratic Party combined a radical rhetoric aimed at the left with a conciliatory stance toward the right that allowed the latter to do as it pleased. This temporary strategy was bound to fall apart as soon as the party came under increased pressure—precisely what occurred during World War I when the party split into separate pro- and antiwar organizations.

The synthesis forged by Bebel and his colleagues masked other confusions as well, particularly about the future. The party had never defined what it meant by “socialization of the means of production.” Many understood

socialism as government ownership rather than direct control by the employees. The debate over state socialism versus workers' councils that unfolded in the years immediately following his death similarly divided the movement. Bebel's socialism, with its attempted amalgamation of the left with the right, did not outlive him. His influence on the socialist movement vanished almost overnight. To the socialists of the twentieth century, he came to represent a bygone era, a feature that helps explain why he is often remembered in nostalgic terms by commentators at both ends of the political spectrum. Nonetheless, he had represented something fundamental and important about how the socialists hoped to refashion a competitive into a truly humane world. It is this optimistic view of promise and possibility that makes Bebel still worth knowing about.

Gary Roth

See also [Bernstein, Eduard](#); [Communism, Varieties of](#); [Engels, Friedrich](#); [Feminism](#); [German Political Thought](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Property, Theories of](#); [Revolution](#); [Socialism](#)

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Matthew Beaumont Matthew Beaumont

Bellamy, Edward

Bellamy, Edward

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Bellamy, Edward

Edward Bellamy (1850–98), a journalist and novelist living in Massachusetts, was almost single-handedly responsible for detonating the explosion of utopian thought that reshaped the political imagination, in both Europe and the United States, at the end of the nineteenth century. *Looking Backward, 2000–1887* ([1888] 2007), his most significant and successful book, was a political romance that featured a nineteenth-century Bostonian who, like Rip Van Winkle, falls into a catatonic sleep from which he reappears more than a hundred years later only after an epochal historical change has taken place. Inside this romantic frame, Bellamy soberly set out a detailed reformist vision of a state-socialist society. He characterized this species of postcapitalist society as Nationalist because it was premised on the conviction that, in order to overcome the contradictions of a competitive commercial system, the nation had to evolve into a single monopolistic corporation democratically responsible for all the forms of production and consumption. Shortly before his death, Bellamy embroidered these ideas in a sequel, *Equality* (1897).

The phenomenal impact of *Looking Backward* can be measured by the fact that, after *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), it became the second novel published in the United States to sell a million copies. At a time of pervasive, sometimes apocalyptic fears about the future of capitalism, when capitalists were panicking and socialists were agitating, its popularity transformed utopian fiction into a viable, indeed almost mandatory, medium for political debate. It has been estimated that *Looking Backward* directly precipitated

the publication of at least sixty-two utopian novels between 1889 and 1900 (the most celebrated of these is no doubt William Morris's anarchistic utopian counterblast, *News from Nowhere* [1891]). The novelist Leo Tolstoy, who commissioned a Russian translation, was representative of the book's first readers when, in the summer of 1889, he noted in his journal, "*Looking Backward* is superb."

But the book also had practical political effects: it inspired a rapidly expanding network of local clubs and societies that disseminated Bellamy's reformist ideas through lectures, pamphlets, and periodicals, attracting in particular those sections of the middle class that felt disconcerted both by capitalism and by the promise or threat of socialism (the latter, Bellamy commented in a letter to W. D. Howells, "Smells to the average American of petroleum, suggests the red flag, with all manner of sexual novelties, and an abusive tone about God and religion"; quoted in Lipow 1982, 22). In the U.S. presidential election of 1892, these so-called Nationalist societies campaigned for the Populists, who adopted a number of Bellamy's recommendations, and whose candidate, General James B. Weaver, polled almost a million votes. Although the direct impact of Bellamy's ideas faded at the end of the century, he continued to influence activists and thinkers; in the twentieth century, Eugene Debs, John Dewey, and Thorstein Veblen all testified to the seminal importance of *Looking Backward* for their own intellectual and political development.

Bellamy was brought up in Chicopee Falls, Massachusetts, the son of the Reverend Rufus King Bellamy, a Baptist clergyman, and Maria Putnam Bellamy, the daughter of a Baptist clergyman. In an autobiographical account from the mid-1890s, Bellamy insisted that the Chicopee Falls of his childhood had been an idyllic place, "where there were no very rich and very few poor, and everybody who was willing to work was sure of a fair living" (Bellamy 1937, 217). In fact, as the location of a cotton mill since 1810, Chicopee Falls had by the mid-nineteenth century become an important industrial center, one characterized by precisely the kind of social divisions that Bellamy's pastoral description of his childhood elides (in 1858, for instance, three hundred Irish laborers went on strike). This industrial landscape shapes the politics of *Looking Backward*, which center on the idea that socialist society will be the peaceful consequence of a

process of industrial evolution—unlike the violent revolutions predicted by socialists such as Morris and Karl Marx. So does his religious background, which informs the millenarian denunciations of capitalist society that attracted so many of the book's contemporary readers. For his part, Bellamy maintained that it was the visit he made to Europe in 1868 to 1869 that startled him into "a vivid realization of the inferno of poverty beneath our civilization," proving decisive for his developing political consciousness, increasingly evident in his journalism of the 1870s and 1880s.

In *Looking Backward*, Bellamy imagines that, after a century of gradual, peaceful change, the "industry and commerce" of the United States in 2000 is no longer run for profit by "a set of irresponsible corporations" in competition with one another; instead, the nation has become

the one capitalist in the place of all other capitalists, the sole employer, the final monopoly in which all previous and lesser monopolies were swallowed up, a monopoly in the profits and economics of which all citizens shared. (chap. 5)

Central to Bellamy's social blueprint is the idea of an industrial army, a labor force run with the regimental efficiency of "the German army in the time of Von Moltke." As this image implies, Bellamy's Nationalism had an authoritarian dimension, despite its egalitarian commitments, and this dimension proved distasteful to contemporaries such as Morris, who deplored its "machine life." From at least the 1930s, of course, the term Nationalism acquired even more authoritarian connotations, though ones that Bellamy could not have predicted, and these have inescapably accrued to *Looking Backward*, displacing its historical significance. But Erich Fromm, a thinker acutely conscious of the dangers of bureaucratic abstraction, was surely correct in his assessment in the foreword to *Looking Backward* ([1888] 1960) that it was "one of the most remarkable books ever published in America."

Matthew Beaumont

See also [American Political Thought](#); [Capitalism](#); [Communism](#), [Varieties of](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Morris, William](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Socialism](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Tolstoy, Leo](#); [Utopianism](#)

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James E. Crimmins James E. Crimmins

Bentham, Jeremy

Bentham, Jeremy

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Bentham, Jeremy

Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832), the utilitarian legal philosopher and radical political reformer, was educated at Westminster School and Queen's College, Oxford, from which he obtained his BA in 1763 and MA in 1766. In November 1763, he entered Lincoln's Inn and listened to cases heard before Lord Mansfield in the Court of King's Bench, including the proceedings against John Wilkes. Although admitted to the bar in 1769, he chose to devote his life to applying scientific principles to the reform of English law. In later life, he remembered the year 1769 chiefly for his first reading of works by David Hume, Cesare Beccaria, and Claude Adrien Helvétius, from whom he gained an appreciation of the analytical potential of the concept of utility and an acute understanding of its protean characteristics as a foundational principle. Unaware that Francis Hutcheson had earlier voiced a version of "the greatest happiness of the greatest number" formula, he recalled that it was either in Beccaria or Joseph Priestley that he first saw the principle (it was almost certainly the former). Beccaria's enlightened views on the principles of law and punishment, together with Helvétius's suggestions for defining and analyzing moral terms, were important influences shaping Bentham's utilitarian moral and legal philosophy. In Hume's secular philosophy, Bentham found an impressive systematic approach to the rules of justice founded in general utility but was disappointed by Hume's moral-sense explanation of the psychology of moral conduct.

Writings

The first product of Bentham's project to critically analyze English law and set it on the new foundation of the principle of utility was *A Fragment on Government* (1776), a criticism of William Blackstone's Lockean statement of the contractual basis of government in *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (1765–69). He had heard Blackstone lecture at Oxford and detected certain fallacies in his natural-law reasoning. In *A Fragment*, Bentham developed this critical perspective further, offering as an alternative the fundamental axiom that "it is the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong," and that "the obligation to minister to general happiness, was an obligation paramount to and inclusive of every other" ([1780] 1970, 393, 441n). This slim volume was a small part of a more substantial but unfinished work intended as a comprehensive critique of Blackstone's legal theory and defense of the "matchless" English constitution, but the larger work did not appear in print until the twentieth century, when it was published as *A Comment on the Commentaries*.

In 1780 (1970), Bentham printed but did not publish *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (IPML), intended as an introduction to his planned *Pannomion*, or complete legal code based upon the utility principle. The Pannomion was designed to include works on civil and penal law, judicial procedure, constitutional law, international law, and political economy. The general purpose of this science of morals and legislation was "to rear the fabric of felicity by the hands of reason and of law" (Bentham [1780] 1970, 11). Out of the final chapter of IPML emerged another major work, *Of Laws in General*, written in 1782 and first published in 1945, in which Bentham methodically examines the sources, theory, and application of laws, and proposed a common standard by which comparisons of different legal systems could be made according to the principle of utility. Based on extracts from IPML and other writings and manuscripts on civil and penal law, Bentham's friend and disciple the Genevan Étienne Dumont published *Traité de législation civile et pénale* (1802), which brought his ideas to the attention of a much wider reading public in continental Europe. The *Traité* was later retranslated into English as *Theory of Legislation* (1840) by the American utilitarian Richard Hildreth.

Panopticon; or the Inspection-House (1791), based on an architectural idea of Bentham's brother Samuel, detailed plans for the construction of a prison (and other controlled institutions, such as poorhouses, factories, schools, hospitals and asylums) based on a circular design and centrally located watchtower. In *Discipline and Punish* (1974), Michel Foucault depicted the Panopticon as heralding the birth of the surveillance society. However, the idea for an easily controlled circular penitentiary was really a humanitarian advance on the disease-ridden hulks and other hellholes that passed for prisons in eighteenth-century England. After many fruitless years attempting to persuade the government to support the Panopticon plan, it was finally given up in 1812 when Bentham was paid £23,000 in compensation for the expenses he had incurred.

Much of the remaining years of the century and opening years of the new century were spent on issues related to economic and financial policy, poor-law reform, the rules of evidence, and other judicial practices. Bentham's political convictions during this period have been widely discussed. It is generally acknowledged that he developed utilitarian arguments for democratic institutions at the time of the French Revolution (including female suffrage), but turned away from parliamentary reform in the aftermath of the Terror. One view, as argued by British philosopher Philip Schofield (2006), is that it was Bentham's discovery of the concept of sinister interest in 1803—the prosecution of partial interests by those in authority contrary to the interests of the subject many—that brought him to publicly advocate democratic institutions. Others believe it was Bentham's meeting with James Mill in late 1808 that provided the catalyst that returned him to the democratic cause (for a classic summary, see John Rowland Dinwiddy's [1989] summary of Bentham's views). What is certain is that from this point forward, his politics became increasingly radical.

The second decade of the century was a period of prolific writing for Bentham, including works on education, ontology, language, logic, private ethics, and religion, as well as law and politics. In *Chrestomathia* (1815) he described a new system of education for the children of the middling and higher ranks in life. The curriculum was utilitarian in intent (chrestomathia meant useful learning) and stressed science and technology rather than the classics and religion. A second part was added in 1817. In the same year,

Bentham published his important treatise on motivation, *A Table of the Springs of Action*, in which he provided an exhaustive classification of the types of pleasures and pains. His major tract on politics of this time was *Plan of Parliamentary Reform, in the Form of a Catechism* (1817), in part based on manuscripts authored in 1809 to 1810. Bentham was now thoroughly convinced of the need for universal male suffrage (female suffrage was dropped from the reform agenda for tactical purposes), annual elections by secret ballot, the election of intellectually qualified independent members of parliament, a system of fines to ensure the regular attendance of representatives, accurate publication of parliamentary debates, and the elimination of royal patronage. Ultimately, a complete and efficient democracy would require the abolition of monarchy and a range of administrative and political devices to provide the people with securities against misrule. Without reform Bentham believed England risked a revolution. Closely related to his critique of the political establishment were his little-known but substantial criticisms of religious institutions, practices, and beliefs in *Church-of-Englandism and its Catechism Examined* (1818), *An Analysis of the Influence of Natural Religion on the Temporal Happiness of Mankind* (1822), and *Not Paul, but Jesus* (1823). In these works, Bentham brought his reasoning on logic, language, and ontology to bear with telling skepticism. At this point, Bentham was widely recognized as the foremost philosophical voice of political reform in Britain.

Bentham dedicated the last ten years of his life to the *Constitutional Code*, the final construct in the Pannomion to accompany the civil, penal, and procedural codes. He began work on the *Code* in 1822 after the Portuguese Cortes expressed interest in receiving drafts of constitutional and legal codes. Its 1830 title, however, directed it to “all nations and all governments professing liberal opinions.” Stimulated by the pace of political change in the Iberian Peninsula and in Greece, Bentham completed much of the design by 1824. Further sections were added during the next two years as his attention was captured by the emergence of new nations in South America, and the first of three volumes was completed in 1827. Elements of the *Code* were drafted under various titles and in various forms, such as *First Principles Preparatory to Constitutional Code*, *Securities against Misrule*, and *Official Aptitude Maximized: Expense Minimized*, and versions were offered or distributed in the newly liberated regions of

Central and South America, as well as in older societies in political transition in the Mediterranean basin and parts of Europe.

The only other major work published in the last phase of Bentham's life was *Rationale of Judicial Evidence, Specially Applied to English Practice* (1827), a five-volume treatise edited by the young John Stuart Mill. Bentham had been considering the subject for many years, making three different attempts to write on it between 1802 and 1812, and Pierre Étienne Louis Dumont had already published *Traité des Preuves Judiciaires* (1823) based on a selection of Bentham's speculations. The younger Mill was asked to merge and collate these disparate beginnings. On the usual basis that law should be based on utilitarian principles, Bentham carefully considered the problems inherent in the rules of evidence operating in the English courts and proposed remedies for them.

Utilitarian Theory

Bentham coined the term *utilitarian* in 1781 to describe his general analytic and practical approach to moral and legal philosophy. At that time, he considered *IPML* as the foundational text of his philosophy. At the base of the theory is the assumption of "the governance of two sovereign masters, *pain* and *pleasure*. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do" (Bentham [1780] 1970, 11). For Bentham pleasure is itself a "good"; indeed, allowing for "immunity from pain," it is "the only good." Likewise, pain is itself an "evil," and "without exception, the only evil" (Bentham [1780] 1970, 100). Nor were these observations restricted to humans—his proposed penal code was to include a section on cruelty to animals. As he explained, "The question is not, Can they *reason*? Nor, can they *talk*? But, can they suffer?" (Bentham [1780] 1970, 283n). The relationship between happiness and pleasure and pain was straightforward and did not require further elaboration: pleasure contributes to happiness, while pain detracts from it. Pleasures and pains are the real entities of individual experience, acting both as the final cause of individual action and as the efficient cause and means to individual happiness.

The utility principle constituted the moral standard for the testing of existing law and for the innovation of new law. As a first principle used to

establish everything else, the principle was not itself subject to proof, but Bentham claimed there was sufficient testimony to the fact that it had always been generally accepted as the standard of right and wrong. The utility of the individual was a part of the public utility in which the individual shared, but one person's utility was just as important as another's. Thus, a person approved of an act or law (or ought to approve it) to the degree to which the happiness of all the individuals affected by it is advanced. In these terms the public interest is constituted of the aggregate of individual interests, construed in terms of the balance of pleasures and pains experienced by each person.

The anticipation of pleasure or pain provided the source for all motives to action, which Bentham divided into four sanctions, which he may have learnt from the Anglican moralist John Gay: physical, political, moral, and religious. These sanctions are available to the moralist and to the legislator in guiding and determining an individual's conduct, and explain how an essentially self-interested individual can be directed or encouraged to perform actions that enhance general happiness. In Bentham's theory of motives the dictates of utility were neither more nor less than the dictates of the most extensive and enlightened benevolence. Other motives were categorized either as semisocial motives (such as love of reputation, desire of amity, and religion), which may or may not coincide with the principle of utility, or purely self-regarding motives (such as physical desire, pecuniary interest, love of power, and self-preservation), which were the least likely to coincide with utility. All motives, including the most extensive benevolence, are rooted in self-interest.

While the consequences of an act are partly dependent on the motives that give birth to the act (and partly on the empirical circumstances in which the act is performed), for Bentham the utility of an act is not dependent on its originating motive(s). Utility is determined solely by its consequences, the advantages and/or disadvantages that result. When deciding whether to act or which act to perform, individuals must calculate as best they can the pleasures and pains that may reasonably be expected to accrue to the persons affected by the acts under consideration, including themselves. The value of pleasure and pain was constituted of the following elements: intensity, duration, certainty or uncertainty, propinquity or remoteness,

fecundity, purity, and extent. A similar calculation should guide the legislator in formulating laws. Though Bentham believed there was nothing in what he had proposed “but what the practice of mankind, wheresoever they have a clear view of their own interest, is perfectly conformable to,” it has often been said that applying the felicific calculus is impractical. Bentham himself recognized that neither the individual nor the legislator could strictly follow the process he had described. Rather he presented it as a model of the ideal calculation, and “as near as the process actually pursued on these occasions approaches to it, so near will such process approach to the character of an exact one” (Bentham [1780] 1970, 40).

We must also note that measure for measure Bentham did not generally consider pleasures to be commensurable with pains in value. The unhappiness created by the loss of something usually has a greater impact on a person than the happiness brought about by its gain to someone else. All other things being equal, the reduction of utility to one person caused by theft will have a greater bearing on that person’s happiness than the gain in utility to another person from a lottery win to the same value. Of course, if the loser is a wealthy person and the gainer a poor man, this standard will not hold. But in the normal run of things, this differential is why Bentham gave a high priority to the protection of property.

Though on occasion Bentham used money to illustrate the value of pleasures, he cautioned against a strict correlation between the two. While we might assume that of two individuals with unequal fortunes the richer of the two would be the happier, it does not follow that adding increments to that person’s wealth will continue to make him or her happier in the same proportion. It is in the nature of the case that the increase in happiness will not be as great as the increase in wealth; the addition of equal increments of money will bring successively less of an increase in happiness. Modern economists know this phenomenon as the law of diminishing marginal utility. One of its practical consequences for Bentham is that where choices present themselves between giving an additional increment to a rich man or to a poor man, in most instances more happiness will result from giving it to the poorer of the two. An argument in favor of a modest redistribution of wealth can be derived from this element of the theory.

The issue has been debated whether the utility principle is a parochial or universal standard. Though in his later constitutional writings Bentham sometimes substituted the terms *universal interest* for *the greatest happiness*, it is fair to say that he was neither a parochialist nor a universalist in any restrictive or absolute sense of these terms. At times he added to the injunction “pursue the greatest happiness” the words “of those affected by the action” or “of the community in question” or some other such phrase. His intention is that we should not consider only our own interest when contemplating action, nor that we should always bear in mind the happiness of the whole of humanity. Rather his intention was that when a person considers the utility of an action, he or she should take into account the impact of the action on the interests or well-being of those he or she knew were likely to be affected by that action. Where the action concerns only the individual, then that is the only interest to be considered. When legislators enact law, they have, or should have, the public interest in view, that is, the aggregate interest of the individuals that constitute the community. At his most universal, Bentham, who was responsible for introducing the word *international* into both the French and English languages, held that the object of international law is “the greatest happiness of all nations taken together” (Bentham 1838–43, 2:538). When the second edition of *IPML* appeared in 1823, Bentham’s preferred usage was “the greatest happiness principle,” having found the “utility principle” and “the greatest happiness of the greatest number” phrases subject to interpretations at odds with the original intent of the theory (although he continued to use both phrases on occasion). When he turned his hand to relating the history of the utility principle in the “Article on Utilitarianism” (1829), he alluded to misinterpretations of the principle and discussed the problem of the potential exclusion of minority interests under the phrase “the greatest happiness of the greatest number,” an outcome he deemed inconsistent with the maxim that each person’s interests must be counted in calculations of general utility.

Bentham’s analysis of penal law, his own theory of punishment, and its architectural adjunct, the Panopticon, have left a lasting impression on the crafting of penal law on both sides of the Atlantic. As Bentham wrote, in all cases of calculating the quantity of punishment, it must be considered that punishment “is in itself an expense: it is in itself an evil.” It adds to the

stockpile of pain in the community, and this should always be avoided when a greater good is not served by its application. This calculation determines which acts the law should seek to deter. Where deterrence failed, punishment was applied. Utility in penal law also encompassed three secondary ends: reformation, disablement, and compensation (Bentham [1780] 1970, 180). The quantity and quality of punishment attached to the violation of a particular law should be calculated to serve the primary end of example or deterrence, but should also include these secondary ends when feasible.

Bentham's writings on civil (or distributive) law were first given circulation in Dumont's *Traité*s. The essence of his civil-law position is the argument that outside the area of criminal activity, "the care of [one's] enjoyments ought to be left almost entirely to the individual" and that "the principal function of government is to guard against pains." From this perspective, the way for governments to protect individuals is to create and confer rights, such as the "rights of personal security, rights of protection for honour, rights of property, rights of receiving aid in case of need." Infringements of these rights should be regarded as offences punishable by law. To this basic utilitarian structure of the civil law, Bentham added the "subordinate ends" of utility—security, subsistence, abundance, and equality, in this order of priority—intended as a guide to the legislator in the development of policy and law. "The more perfect enjoyment is in all these respects, the greater is the sum of social happiness: and especially of that happiness which depends upon the laws" (Dumont [1840] 2004, 95–96)

At the root of Bentham's understanding of security as the principal object of law is the security of expectation—the guarantee against future loss, which enables individuals to confidently plan for the future in their labor and contractual arrangements, knowing that they will not be disappointed in their legitimate expectations. Based on the assumption that in nearly every instance individuals are the best judge of their own interests, the legislator must remove whatever obstacles stand in the way of individuals securely pursuing and fulfilling their expectations. Here we can locate the emergence of indirect utilitarian theory, an approach further developed by Mill, and also see the first development of what Bentham later termed the *disappointment-preventing principle*, intended as a practical strategy to be

followed by the legislator when the effect of new legislation would otherwise be to thwart an individual's legitimate expectations. Where possible, the pain of disappointment must be avoided, but where it cannot be avoided, it must be adequately compensated. This provision was meant as a safeguard against wide-ranging and ill-conceived plans to redistribute property, such as occurred in France following the 1789 Revolution. However, it was not a bulwark against all reform in the distribution of property. Slavery should be abolished, Bentham thought, but not in a manner that might reduce to poverty those legally involved in the slave trade; compensation from public funds would make up for the disappointed expectations of legal slave traders.

Bentham's theory of civil law provided him with the essential framework for addressing economic issues, but his approach also benefited from the influence of Adam Smith. In *Defence of Usury* (1787), his first essay in political economy, Bentham professed himself a disciple, albeit one who was critical of the restrictive lending laws supported by Smith. In subsequent economic writings, Bentham continued to adhere to the laissez-faire principle, but at times with modifications dictated by general utility. Facilitating individuals in the pursuit of their interests in a free market is what government should do because this is the proven best way to maximize general happiness. Where laissez-faire does not produce the best result, the legislator can act in other direct and indirect ways to produce the optimal outcome, consistent with the security-providing principle and with the disappointment-preventing principle. The question, as Bentham put it in *Manual of Political Economy*, "is to know what ought and what ought not to be done by government. It is in this view, and in this view only, that the knowledge of what is done and takes place without the interference of government can be of any practical use" (Stark 1952–54, 1: 224). Based on past experience, he thought governments should not act in the economic realm as much as they generally do, hence the motto "Be quiet" and the lists of nonagenda items. Where departures from this general rule are required—such as when vital subsistence goods would be priced beyond the reach of many in times of emergency—they become agenda items for government (Stark 1952–54, 3:33). This stance points to a political economy in which laissez-faire holds general sway, the basic rules of which are maintained by

government, with occasional exceptions justified on the grounds of utility (or its subordinate ends).

Influence

Bentham's utilitarian ideas had a substantial influence on later developments in the areas of political thought, legal theory, and moral philosophy. In political and constitutional thought, his ideas were advanced in nineteenth-century Britain by the philosophic radicals, including James and John Stuart Mill, Francis Place, George Grote, Edwin Chadwick, Arthur Roebuck, Joseph Parkes, Albany Fonblanque, and Charles Buller. Outside Britain, the various editions and translations of his writings introduced his ideas into the political discourse of North and South America, France, Portugal, Spain, Greece, Russia, and elsewhere, occasionally incurring the ire of national governments and being banned by local censors. Historians of law and legal philosophy cite John Austin as the most influential early disciple of Bentham's jurisprudence. Though Austin followed Bentham in developing a rational and utilitarian approach to law, his stress on the theological elements of his philosophy in *The Province of Jurisprudence Determined* (1832) owed more to his reading of William Paley's religious utilitarianism than to Bentham's secular version of the theory. It was largely through the sympathetic criticism of John Stuart Mill that Victorian moralists became acquainted with Bentham's philosophy. Partly in response to T. B. Macaulay's criticism of James Mill's explanation of the political ramifications of utilitarianism in an *Essay on Government* (1820), and partly as the result of his own reflections on his intellectual inheritance, John Stuart Mill developed an amended version of utilitarian theory. His revisionism took concrete form in the essay "Bentham" (1838), is reflected in *On Liberty* (1859), and received definitive expression in *Utilitarianism* (1861). In the last, Mill sought to defend the basic Benthamite hedonism of utilitarian theory, while offering refinements designed as responses to critics of the doctrine. The most problematic of these is the distinction between the qualitative differences of types of pleasures, which tended to undermine the aggregative dimension of the theory by merging uncertainly with theories of virtue and rights.

The influence of Bentham's legal theory has chiefly been felt in legal positivism, which came to dominate the philosophy of law in Western societies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. With its stress on the division between morality and law, and the subordination of the former to the will of the sovereign, legal positivism was derived by Bentham and Austin from utilitarian principles, but also owed a good deal to Hobbes's command theory of law. Identifying law in empirical or descriptive terms—the location of political sovereignty, the particular commands or laws of the sovereign, and the sanctions employed to deter and punish those who disobey—is the first step in the critical evaluation of law. Only then can the legal theorist move on to consider what the law ought to be; it is from the standpoint of utilitarian morality that existing law should be judged. In certain respects, Austin's utilitarian legal theory had a greater impact than Bentham's on Victorian legal philosophy, for three reasons: (1) it retained the idea of God as the ultimate legislator, (2) it was less critical of common law, and (3) Austin's critique posed less of a threat to the legal profession than the more radical approach of Bentham. In particular, Austin's work was substantially better received in America, where Bentham was commonly perceived as a godless atheist with a wholly materialist and mechanistic view of human nature.

Bentham remains influential in a wide range of contemporary fields of study, including linguistics, psychology, penology, administrative theory, economics, and education, as well as ethics, jurisprudence, democratic theory, and legal philosophy. His critical analyses of laws prohibiting homosexuality, his defense of animal rights and the rights of women, and his general theory of punishment are among aspects of his writings still read with interest, and philosophers continue to debate the merits and shortcomings of the utility principle as the appropriate test of morality.

James E. Crimmins

See also [Animal Rights](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Empire and Political Thought](#); [Equality and Egalitarianism](#); [Feminism](#); [Humanitarian Intervention](#); [International Law](#); [International Relations Theory and Political Thought](#); [Law and Political Thought](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Mill, James](#); [Mill, John Stuart](#); [Nineteenth-](#)

[Century Political Thought](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Positivism](#); [Punishment](#); [Representation](#); [United Nations](#), [Theories of](#); [Utilitarianism](#)

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James Burton James Burton

Bergson, Henri

Bergson, Henri

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Bergson, Henri

Henri-Louis Bergson (1859–1941) was a French philosopher best known for his work on time, memory, and evolution and for his use of intuition in philosophical method. The attention he pays throughout his work to the processual nature of reality—to states of becoming rather than being—associates him with process philosophy. Due to his insistence on the inherent creative tendencies in biological life, he is often considered a vitalist, though he differs from proponents of other traditions of vitalism in maintaining a nonteleological view of evolution. An ethical dimension can be traced across his central ontological, psychological, and biological concerns, and several authors have developed the social and political implications of his philosophy. Political thinkers influenced by Bergson include Charles Péguy, Georges Sorel, and Antonio Gramsci. In his last major work, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, Bergson directly addressed such topics as the evolution of societies, the nature of religion, and the genealogy of political modernity.

Prewar Life and Career

Bergson was born in Paris on October 18th, 1859, to Michael Bergson, a Polish musician, and Kate Levinson, from Doncaster, England. In 1869, when the family moved to London, the ten-year-old Bergson remained in Paris to continue his education, having been awarded a bursary by the French government. During his secondary school years, he continued to

excel, particularly in mathematics, yet eventually opted to study philosophy at the École Normale Supérieure, where his fellow students included Émile Durkheim and Jean Jaurès. After graduating, he taught at several schools (*lycées*) while preparing his doctoral theses. The longer of these, *Time and Free Will* [*Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*] (1889) constitutes his first major work.

In 1892, Bergson married Louise Neuberger (a relative of Marcel Proust). Their daughter, Jeanne Bergson, was born deaf in 1896. Later the same year, he published his second book, *Matter and Memory* [*Matière et Mémoire*] and soon after became *maître de conférences* (equivalent of Associate Professor) at the École Normale Supérieure. In 1900, he was appointed to the Chair in Greek and Latin Philosophy at the Collège de France, transferring to the Chair in Modern Philosophy in 1904 following the death of its previous occupant, Gabriel Tarde. In 1901, he was elected a member of the *Académie des sciences morales et politiques*. Significant publications from around this time include *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic* [*Le Rire*] ([1900] 2005) and *Introduction to Metaphysics* ([1903] 1912).

At the Collège de France, Bergson's lectures, which continued from his appointment until 1914, were so popular with both students and the wider public that it was suggested that they be moved to a theater. The already widespread interest in his work was further augmented in 1907 (1911) with the publication of *Creative Evolution* [*L'Évolution Créatrice*], which attracted much admiration as well as criticism. An English translation of *Time and Free Will* was published in 1910, with translations of *Matter and Memory* and *Creative Evolution* following in 1911. In the same year, Bergson gave several lectures in Britain, at the Universities of Oxford, Birmingham, and London, where he established good relations with, among others, Arthur Balfour (former British prime minister and future wartime secretary of state). In 1913, he made a lecture tour of the United States organized by Columbia University (where his first lecture was so popular that it reputedly caused one of the first traffic jams on Broadway). In 1914, he gave the Gifford lectures at the University of Edinburgh.

Political Activity and Later Life

As for most Europeans, the outbreak of World War I constituted a major turning point in Bergson's life. From this time, his energy was increasingly diverted away from philosophical research toward public political activity. He wrote articles and gave talks in support of the Allied war effort, including "The Meaning of the War" (1914) and "The Evolution of German Imperialism" (1915). In 1916, he travelled with other French academics to Madrid to encourage Spain to support the Allies. His most significant political activity during the war—both in terms of his own life and his influence on international politics—was the set of missions he undertook in the United States on behalf of the French government.

The French Prime Minister Aristide Briand called on Bergson to make an unofficial visit to the United States and make personal contact with President Woodrow Wilson to negotiate U.S. financial and military support for the Allies. Wilson had made such support contingent on the Allies' agreeing to the creation of a League of Nations, but was not yet convinced of the commitment of the French government, partly due to its refusal to countenance the entry of Germany to such an organization prior to its defeat and the imposition of reparations. According to Bergson's biographer Philippe Soulez (1989), his interventions were decisive in convincing Wilson of both the French commitment to the League of Nations and the importance of the U.S. not only providing financial resources, but also adding its full military force to the struggle against the Axis powers.

Following the war, Bergson sought to retreat from public life and return his attention fully to his philosophical work. This return was interrupted, however, by his nomination in 1922 to the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation, an advisory group for the League of Nations, whose other members included Paul Valéry, Thomas Mann, and Albert Einstein. Bergson's interpretation of Einstein's theory of relativity was published in 1922 (1965) as *Duration and Simultaneity*, leading to a controversial series of intellectual confrontations between them.

In 1925, ill health forced Bergson to retire from his public duties. On being awarded the 1927 Nobel Prize for Literature, he was unable to travel to Stockholm for the ceremony. He was nevertheless able to complete his most sociological and ethical work, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*

[Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion] (1932), and publish a final collection of essays, *The Creative Mind [La Pensée et le mouvant]* (1933). Following the outbreak of World War II and the Nazi invasion of France, Bergson refused an offer of exemption from anti-Semitic treatment under the Vichy regime. Instead, despite a declared affinity with Catholicism, he registered as a Jew. He died shortly after of pulmonary congestion, on January 3rd, 1941.

Three Major Works

Despite not engaging explicitly with social or political questions, Bergson's influential texts on time, memory, and evolution all have potentially wideranging social implications. Most of his major contributions to modern thought can be traced back to his analysis of a single problem: that of the spatialization of time, or more specifically, the confusion of duration with extensity.

For Bergson, the way we most commonly and immediately treat time in our everyday lives actually translates it into something more like space: the abstract, homogeneous medium of Newtonian physics, which is also implied in the time we measure and record with clocks, calendars, and timetables, treats instants as though they were points in space, and reduces time to the distance between them. Rendering time measurable, being able to compare different processes of change and movement, is so important to human activity, from planning and organizing in everyday life to carrying out scientific experiments, that this spatialized conception of time comes to be taken for granted: it is one of the "immediate givens of consciousness" referred to in the French title of *Time and Free Will*.

The critical aspect of Bergson's philosophy consists in asking us to give up this habit of thinking of time in terms of extension. A correlative gesture is the call to recognize the experience of a nonspatialized temporality, which he terms *duration (la durée)*. Duration can be accessed directly only through an act of intuition whereby we "insert ourselves" in duration. Where spatialized time implies an abstract medium in which things move, duration refers to "pure movement," continuous growth. Pure movement does not mean conceiving of movement as independent of matter: it is,

rather, a question of reversing the habitual direction of thought, such that, instead of taking the existence of objects in space for granted, and from this perspective considering their motion, we rather begin with the fact or experience of movement and consider secondarily that which moves.

A further key thesis of Bergson's philosophy is that duration—or reality itself—is creative in that every moment is radically new and qualitatively different from the last—even in (in fact because of) its continuity with those before and after. Thus, where clock time is extensive, quantitative, and homogeneous, duration is intensive, qualitative, and heterogeneous. Clock time implies predictability; duration implies inventiveness and radical change. These two tendencies—one creative and indeterminate, the other mechanizing—are found in all Bergson's major works. In *Time and Free Will*, he argues that our reduction of time to the status of a homogeneous spatial medium obscures the creative aspect of reality, making it seem as though everything in the universe were governed by deterministic laws—thus constructing a defense of freedom at the metaphysical and a psychological levels while also accounting for the efficacy of the quantitative understanding of time in both science and everyday life.

In *Matter and Memory*, it becomes clear that Bergson's central dualism between creative and deterministic tendencies is not simply one of false appearance (spatialized time-mechanism) versus underlying truth (duration-creativity); rather, they are two tendencies that in their very opposition to one another together constitute reality. On this basis, he argues for the immanent reality of both spirit and matter, moving beyond traditional philosophical disputes that treat idealism (the view that reality is in some sense a projection or construct of the mind) and realism (viewing the world as existing independently of mind) as mutually exclusive. This treatment also allows him to argue, contrary to contemporaneous scientific research, that the brain may be the instrument of recall without necessarily operating as a physical repository for memories.

In *Creative Evolution*, the two tendencies are found in biological life: on the one hand, a creative force (the *élan vital*) that is responsible for the ongoing, open-ended development of life in divergent directions; on the other hand, the restrictive effects of the matter in which this creative

evolution must be realized. Once again, the critical aspect of Bergson's argument is based on an analysis of our tendency to reduce real time or movement (here in the form of the process of evolution) to a series of points along a scale (this time represented by the set of evolved species). As with his accounts of time and memory, this analysis leaves us with a flawed understanding of evolution and life as mechanical and determinate. While material constraints do have a mechanizing effect on the products of evolution, it is the very nature of the *élan vital* to resist this tendency in its ongoing creative development.

Philosophy of Society

It is perhaps unsurprising that a philosophy centered on a rigorous defense of freedom, creativity, and change, and which incorporated critical accounts of the limitations of scientific and intellectual thinking, should have appealed to those concerned with social and political reform. Before World War I, a number of contemporaries, such as Péguy and Sorel, perceived the sociopolitical potential of Bergson's philosophy and urged him to turn his attention more firmly in the direction of politics and social movements.

Sorel published five articles on Bergson in the journal *Mouvement socialiste* and along with Edouard Berth, promoted the project of bringing together the thought of Bergson and Karl Marx. Bergson himself was sympathetic to these calls, as he was to Albert Adès's request in 1918 that he dedicate a series of seminars to reframing his earlier work in more practically political terms. Yet despite an interest in political economy and the study of society demonstrated in his lycée teaching and in the social significance he attributed to laughter in his short book on the subject, it was not until his final work, appearing twenty-five years after *Creative Evolution*, that he directly addressed social and political questions in detail.

Bergson's final major work, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, comprises a genealogical and philosophical enquiry into the nature of society, an account of the sociocultural role and origins of religion and morality, a socioevolutionary theory of fiction, and a diagnosis of the problems of the modern political era. Here the creative and mechanizing tendencies that *Creative Evolution* accounted for in biological life (and that

can be traced all the way back to the distinction between duration and extensity of Bergson's early work) are addressed in terms of human society and culture, where they constitute the two sources of divergent forms of society: morality and religion. At the same time, this retrospectively makes clear the ethical, social, and political significance of the opposition between duration and extensity (or creativity and mechanization) explored in the metaphysical, psychological, and biological registers of his previous works.

In *Two Sources*, not only intelligence, but also sociality are treated as evolved human traits that are beneficial for survival and carry certain drawbacks. Though, following *Creative Evolution*, these traits are the product of the creative tendency in biological life, it is the mechanizing tendency that most easily takes the dominant role in organizing human society.

Intelligence poses a threat to societies in the form of individualism. The role of morality is to keep such threats in check by operating as a form of social pressure to ensure that each member of the group adheres to its laws, customs, and norms. However, for Bergson, morality in the form of pressure is the product of the tendency in life toward stasis or closure. He refers to it as "closed morality" and to the society it helps preserve as a "closed society." However, since the respect and responsibility members owe one another within the closed society do not extend to those outside its walls (real or symbolic), the threat of individualism reemerges at the intersocial level, with whole communities endangering one another.

Hence, in contrast to the closed society, Bergson conceives of an alternative social form that would derive from life's creative tendency—the open society made possible by open morality. The latter would be based on aspiration rather than on pressure, and an expression of the unbounded creativity of living evolution would constitute the basis for a society with neither restrictions on membership nor implicit sanctioning of destruction of life—a kind of ethical cosmopolitanism with biological roots.

Though Bergson recognized that there are huge obstacles to achieving the open society, he also argued that, in the modern era, when the mechanizing tendency toward the closed society is supplemented by the destructive power of mechanized warfare, such that entire national populations face the

threat of extinction, it is more urgent than ever for humanity to try to make the immense effort required.

In the course of his discussion of the ethical movement from the closed to the open, Bergson pays close attention to the role of religion, distinguishing the static religion of the closed society from the dynamic religion associated with those mystic figures that exhibit a boundless and unconditional love toward others (Christ being archetypal). A particularly striking aspect of Bergson's account is his theory of fabulation in which he attributes an evolutionary and social function to the human capacity to construct and believe in the fictional (this being one of the conditions making religious belief possible in the first place).

The emphasis he placed on the figure of the true mystic seems to be one reason for the relative neglect of this text among Bergson's works (along with its late appearance). Hence, its potential value for the philosophy of society, political theory, the sociology of religion, and indeed, the social and political study of fictionalizing more widely, has only recently begun to be considered.

James Burton

See also [Darwinism and Social Darwinism](#); [Empire and Political Thought](#); [Gramsci, Antonio](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Popper, Karl](#); [Sorel, Georges](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [United Nations, Theories of the](#)

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Jamie Reed Jamie Reed

Berlin, Isaiah

Berlin, Isaiah

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Berlin, Isaiah

Isaiah Berlin (1909–97) was a British political theorist, historian of ideas, and philosopher who is widely regarded as one of the foremost liberal political thinkers of the twentieth century.

Berlin's early thought is influenced by issues central to the analytical philosophy that was predominant in Oxford during the 1930s and 1940s. Although Berlin came to break away from a direct engagement with this form of analytical philosophy, it influenced his subsequent work through an underlying empiricism and skepticism toward systematic metaphysical theorizing. From the early 1950s, the focus of Berlin's work shifted from the debates of analytical philosophy toward the issues of political and social theory and the history of ideas. Berlin argued in favor of the continuing relevance of moral and political thought against a prevailing academic background that was largely dismissive of the claims of normative theory. The case for this position is presented most notably in the essays "Does Political

Theory Still Exist?" (1962) and "The Purpose of Philosophy" (1962). In a similar vein, writings such as "Historical Inevitability" (1954) and "The Concept of Scientific History" (1960) argued against scientific and determinist interpretations of historical development that were espoused by many of his contemporaries.

The writings in the history of ideas that Berlin set upon in earnest from the early 1950s onward are primarily concerned with exploring the role of ethical monism in the tradition of political thought. For Berlin, monism constitutes the dominant, though mistaken, belief that all genuine values are ultimately harmonious. According to Berlin, this belief is central to the philosophy of the Enlightenment, and his studies of various Counter-Enlightenment figures such as Giambattista Vico, Johann Gottfried Herder, Johann Georg Hamann, and Montesquieu constitute an investigation into the work of thinkers who challenged this perspective.

The 1958 lecture “Two Concepts of Liberty” represents the most complete single expression of the main themes of Berlin’s political theory. Through an exploration of the history of social and political thought Berlin presents a case for the adoption of liberal ideals against those of political authoritarianism. The central thesis of the piece revolves around a conceptual distinction Berlin posits between the competing notions of negative and positive liberty. In short, ideas of negative liberty view freedom as a sphere of individual life that is sacrosanct and protected from infringement by others, whether persons or governments. In contrast, positive ideas of freedom emphasize the value of liberty as a condition of fulfilling human potentiality, and thus, it is a freedom to an end goal. Berlin argued that while both concepts of freedom are valid in their own right, the positive form is more prone to become confused with other values, such as justice and equality, which are in fact separate and distinct ideals. Moreover, positive liberty has historically proven itself more conducive to the establishment of political tyranny. In making this case, Berlin argued that a degree of culpability should be attributed to past political thinkers for justifying authoritarianism in the name of liberty.

In support of the case for a defense of negative freedom and liberal policies in general, Berlin makes recourse to what has subsequently been recognized by most commentators as the key theme of his political thought: the existence of a pluralism of values or value-pluralism. According to Berlin, ethical life is composed of a multitude of values for which there is no fixed or inevitable hierarchical ordering of importance. Indeed, many values and ideals are not only incompatible, but also incommensurable, meaning that some degree of conflict and loss between values is unavoidable. To assume

that conflicting values can be harmonized is a fallacy, and to seek to mold human life to meet a fixed structure of ethical goods is to invite political authoritarianism and coercion. Therefore, liberalism with its protection of a sphere of negative freedom is both the most humane form of political organization, as well as the one that most accurately reflects the nature of human ethical experience.

Some subsequent thinkers have challenged the connection Berlin drew between liberalism and the existence of a pluralism of values. For example, John Gray in his *Isaiah Berlin* (1995) has argued that value-pluralism undermines efforts to imbue the ideals of liberalism with any universal applicability, and therefore, it can only be viewed as one form of political life alongside many others that may well reject its guiding ideals. It is this idea of value plurality and its consequences for political theory that has constituted the main theme of Berlin's intellectual legacy.

Jamie Reed

See also [Liberalism](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Totalitarianism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Manfred Steger Manfred Steger

Bernstein, Eduard

Bernstein, Eduard

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Bernstein, Eduard

Eduard Bernstein was a leading German Social Democratic politician and theorist. His life is a microcosmic reflection of the first century of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD). Like the German labor movement itself, Bernstein started out as a socialist eclectic; then he converted to Marxist orthodoxy only to return to an eclectic position that, enriched by Marxist theory, nonetheless espoused a democratic socialism that recognized Marxism as only one among several important theoretical sources. The core of Bernstein's views is not the proletarian revolution and the prospect of the general abolition of private property, but an ethical commitment to representative democracy, social justice, and equality.

Born in Berlin on January 6, 1850, Bernstein grew up in modest circumstances. After a short career as a bank clerk in Berlin, he joined the SPD as a campaign speaker and pamphleteer. Expelled from Germany in 1878 as a result of German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck's repressive Anti-Socialist Laws, Bernstein settled in Zurich, Switzerland, from where he edited *Der Sozialdemokrat*, the rallying point of the underground SPD press. When Bismarck secured his expulsion from Switzerland, Bernstein continued publication of the periodical from London, where he cultivated close contacts to Friedrich Engels and the leaders of the socialist Fabian Society such as Sidney and Beatrice Webb and George Bernard Shaw. When Engels died in 1895, Bernstein served as his literary executor and was widely regarded as one of the leading Marxist voices in Europe.

Thus, it came as a shock to his party comrades when Bernstein launched a series of tough criticisms against Marxist theory. In a number of articles and books that appeared between 1896 and 1900, the former Marxist stalwart rejected the central Marxist dogma of the inevitable collapse of capitalist society and the ensuing revolutionary seizure of power by the working class. In his view, Marx and Engels had painted an unrealistic picture of a revolutionary final goal. Suggesting that capitalism was getting better at containing its weaknesses, Bernstein advocated an evolutionary road to socialism through peaceful, parliamentary means centered on success at the ballot box and gradual democratic reforms. Stressing the tight connection between means and ends, he insisted that the extension of democracy required democratic methods. Moreover, he argued that the SPD ought to broaden its narrow working-class base and appeal to the middle class as well, thus turning itself into a genuine people's party. Finally, rejecting the Marxist view that liberalism and socialism constituted diametrically opposed worldviews, Bernstein urged socialists to consider themselves "the legitimate heirs of liberalism" and embrace the Enlightenment language of citizenship, human rights, rule of law, and universal ethics.

Although Bernstein's views on Democratic Socialism became the widely accepted cornerstones of modern European social democracy after World War II, they were severely condemned at three successive SPD congresses at the turn of the century. Various European Marxists such as Vladimir Illyich Lenin in Russia and Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Kautsky in Germany wrote vitriolic pamphlets calling Bernstein a "muddle-headed revisionist" betraying the cause of the working class. At the outbreak of World War I in 1914, Bernstein first voted with the entire SPD leadership in favor of the war, but reversed his opinion a year later, arguing that the German Imperial Government had been the aggressor. When the Bolsheviks seized power in Russia in 1917, Bernstein emerged as one of their earliest and fiercest critics, warning that Lenin's brand of Soviet communism was based on the "erroneous belief in the omnipotence of brute force." He predicted, correctly as it turned out, that the Soviet regime represented an "odd repetition of the old despotism of the Czars" that would lead Russia into a "social and economic abyss." In the short-lived German Weimar Republic (1918–33), the aging Bernstein held high political posts, including the cabinet position of undersecretary of the treasury. During his parliamentary

tenure from 1920 to 1928, he concentrated on matters of taxation and foreign affairs while maintaining his busy journalistic schedule. Bernstein died on December 18, 1932, only six weeks before Adolf Hitler took power in Germany.

Manfred Steger

See also Bebel, Auguste; [Capitalism](#); [Communism](#), [Varieties of](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Engels, Friedrich](#); [German Political Thought](#); [Kautsky, Karl](#); [Lenin and Leninism](#); [Luxemburg, Rosa](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Revolution](#); [Russian Revolution](#), [Political Thought of the](#); [Social Democracy](#); [Socialism](#)

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Alton Hornsby Jr. Alton Hornsby Jr.

Black Power

Black power

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Black Power

Although several scholars have suggested that the ideological framework and practical applications for African American leadership based upon promotion of insular community interests and control of community institutions—Black Power—had their origins in the period of antebellum slavery and others contend that the modern use of the phrase originated with congressman Adam Clayton Powell in the 1950s, there is a general consensus that contemporary Black Power resulted from the Meredith march of 1966.

The Meredith March of 1966

In early June 1966, James Meredith, the first known black student to enroll at the University of Mississippi, began a proposed 200-mile walk from Memphis, Tennessee, to Jackson, Mississippi, to inspire Mississippi blacks to vote. Despite the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, many Southern blacks, particularly in such areas as rural Mississippi, still were afraid to register and cast their votes. Meredith's proposed march was to be a demonstration against fear. The Meredith march had barely begun when, on June 6, he was struck, but not seriously wounded, by a shotgun blast. The first news reports did not clearly describe Meredith's condition, and many blacks assumed that he was mortally wounded, another civil rights advocate felled by an assassin's bullet. Civil rights leaders from throughout the nation denounced what was feared to be a slaying and vowed to carry

on where their fallen comrade had left off. Several of these, including Martin Luther King Jr., of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), Stokely Carmichael of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and Floyd McKissick of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), sped to Memphis to continue the March Against Fear.

As the new marchers, black and white, gathered on U.S. Highway 51, undercurrents of disunity surfaced. At least since 1963, younger elements in the Civil Rights Movement had begun to question two major tenets of the leadership of Martin Luther King Jr.—nonviolence and white participation. During the Meredith march, leaders of CORE and more particularly of SNCC, questioned the presence of whites in the Mississippi protests. As violence against the demonstrators continued, and as Mississippi law enforcement officers arrested some of them, the tenets of King fell into further disfavor with the Meredith marchers. Among the Young Turks who dared to challenge openly the leadership of King, the most articulate was the SNCC's Carmichael. After emerging from a Mississippi jail, the fiery, West Indian-born youth told a crowd of blacks that he was not going to jail again and that every courthouse in Mississippi "ought to be burned down to get rid of the dirt." Then Carmichael shouted a phrase previously used by SNCC's Willie Ricks and others, "Black Power." "Black Power," the younger blacks responded. "Black Power," Carmichael roared four additional times. "Black Power," the young blacks replied each time. When Martin Luther King Jr. heard the chanting of the slogan, he expressed disapproval. His closest followers urged the slogan "Freedom Now" upon the marchers. But Martin Luther King Jr. was not in control of the Meredith march; Carmichael was. And his cry was "Black Power."

Defining Black Power

What did it all mean? The media, white politicians, black leaders, almost everyone, reacted with a definition. Many saw it as an ill omen. It was, in their view, a verbal justification of the black violence of the Harlem and Watts riots of the previous two years. It was black racism, black retaliation for the long years of white oppression. It was rage, ungodly, un-American.

It was almost a year after the Meredith march that Carmichael collaborated with political scientist Charles Hamilton to articulate a definition of Black Power. They saw the concept principally in political terms. Accepting the reality of two American societies, one white and one black, they argued that the black community must be developed, reconstructed, and controlled in the interest of blacks. Separate black political organizations should run and elect black candidates in black communities. The institutions of black America, particularly the economic and educational ones, should be responsive to black people. Only by organization and control of their own communities, they argued, could blacks ever expect to achieve social and political integration into the mainstream of American society. A powerful black political base and powerful black-controlled social and economic institutions, Carmichael and Hamilton seemed to say, would win respect and acceptance from white America and achieve black liberation.

After Carmichael and Hamilton gave their philosophical position on the questions and issues surrounding the controversial slogan “Black Power,” politicians, journalists, civil rights leaders, scholars, and even schoolchildren continued to debate the meaning of the now famous slogan.

When scholars in the civil rights era began to assess the concept of Black Power, many, such as Harold Cruse and Martin Duberman, agreed with Carmichael and Hamilton that political control of organizations and institutions in the black community are at the core of the concept, but the further ramifications have led to a myriad of positions. Some, such as Maulana Karenga and Alvin Poussaint, characterized it as a positive, creative concept that bolstered black self-esteem. Others, including Adelaide Cromwell Hill and Lawrence Neal, connected it to black nationalism, including a nationalistic black religion and Pan-Africanism. Still others, led by Komozi Woodard, found a cultural dimension in it as expressed, for example, in the relationship between the Black Arts movement and black politics. Some, including Harold Cruse and Nathan Wright, suggested that politically, Black Power had resulted from the failure of the Civil Rights Movement.

As the scholars opined on the question of Black Power, black activists of various persuasions debated the issue in the media, in public forums, and

often behind closed doors. Robert F. Williams of North Carolina, for example, an advocate of black self-defense, identified black progress and Black Power with “violence and upheaval.” The black nationalist Karenga de-emphasized the economic and political aspects of Black Power and extolled the virtues of “color culture and consciousness.” Money, he said, was not the answer to the problem. He called on African Americans “to Think Black, Talk Black, Act Black, Create Black” and “Live Black,” which were as important to him as buying and voting black.

One of the first of the older black leaders to embrace the concept of Black Power was McKissick, then head of CORE. CORE, like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), had been founded as a biracial group dedicated to racial integration and equality, but during and after the Meredith march, McKissick pulled the organization away from a dominant white influence and into Black Power. Yet McKissick seemed to have had some early difficulties in defining it. After considerable criticism from white supporters of CORE, McKissick declared in July, 1966 that “Black Power is not Black supremacy,” and it did not mean the exclusion of white Americans from the black revolution, did not advocate violence, and would not lead to riots. Sometime later, he said the Black Power movement attempted to “achieve power for Black People” in six different areas: political, economical, improved self-image, development of leadership, federal law enforcement, and consumer mobilization.

Malcolm X, the most articulate philosopher of the Nation of Islam, like some scholars, saw the American black struggle in international terms. During and after his heralded pilgrimage in 1964, Malcolm continuously advocated a link between the problems of Africans and Asians and that of African Americans and that the black problem in the United States should be argued on the floor of the United Nations. Although Malcolm was assassinated prior to the rise of the new cry of Black Power, his previous positions would have placed him in the camp of its advocates.

Another nontraditional African American religious leader, Albert Cleage, founder of the Black Christian Nationalist Church (The Church of the Black Madonna), believed that blacks did not understand institutionalized power. He called the so-called Black Revolution in the 1960s and 1970s

unstructured. Black Power, he felt, could be attained through the church, but only if it was relevant and able to structure black institutions and spearhead a black revolution. He believed that such a church could be found through black Christian nationalism.

The man who is often credited with originating the Black Power slogan, Adam Clayton Powell Jr., discussed the matter in the U.S. House of Representatives during the Eighty-Ninth Congress. Powell said, on that occasion, “Black people must seek audacious power—the kind of power which cradles your head amongst the stars and gives you the security to stand up as proud men and women, eyeball to eyeball with the rest of the world” (Cong. Rec. 12438–12439 (1966)). He described his own position as Chairman of the House Committee on Education and Labor, in which he controlled all labor and education legislation, as an example of “audacious power.” Powell, understandably, saw Black Power principally in political terms: black control of black organizations and institutions.

While McKissick, the head of CORE, placed his organization in the Black Power camp with SNCC, the heads of the three other major civil rights organizations, SCLC, the NAACP, and the Urban League, initially sought strenuously to disassociate themselves from the Black Power concept and movement. From the beginning, King, head of the SCLC and the most revered of America’s civil rights leaders, had to confront the issue. He was in the original Meredith march and witnessed the transformation of ideas among the Young Turks of the Civil Rights Movement. In Mississippi, King urged Carmichael and McKissick to abandon the Black Power slogan. He told them that he was concerned about the suggestive sense of the phrase and that civil rights leaders must “work to build racial pride and refute the notion that black is evil and ugly” and that “this must come through a program, not merely through a slogan.” Carmichael, now clearly in control of the Meredith march, again challenged the preeminence of King’s philosophy and told the SCLC leader that he must take a public stand for Black Power. King, always conscious of the need for unity in the Civil Rights Movement, tried hard to prevent the Black Power slogan from tearing the Civil Rights Movement asunder. While he would not embrace the concept, he insisted that it did not pose the dangers that many saw in it. It was only a problem of semantics. Carmichael, McKissick, the Young

Turks, all of the exponents of Black Power were still united with him, King claimed, in the greater goal of black liberation through nonviolent resistance. Many of the theoreticians of Black Power found considerable comfort in the Harlem, Watts, Detroit, and other mid-1960s riots. By 1967, in partial recognition of this fact, King escalated his opposition to the concept of Black Power. It was, he said, an understandable reaction to racial discrimination and oppression, but it was unprogrammatic and hence could not achieve the goals sought by the Civil Rights Movement. It was, in fact, “nihilist” and carried the “seeds of its own doom.”

Roy Wilkins of the NAACP was much more uncompromising than King in his opposition to Black Power. Although it may be clarified again and again, he said in an NAACP memo on August 4, 1966, “‘Black power’ in the quick, uncritical and highly emotional adoption it has received from some segments of a beleaguered people can mean in the end only black death.” The NAACP would have nothing to do with the concept and apparently as little as possible to do with its advocates. Yet as Yohuru Williams (2000) reminds us, Wilkins was one of the few members of the civil rights establishment to break ranks and defend the Black Panther Party after he concluded in the early 1970s that unconstitutional and illegal methods were being used to systematically destroy the Black Panthers.

The Urban League’s Whitney Young, like King, sought not to inflame the Black Power issue. Young’s organization, heavily supported by white businessmen, reaffirmed its commitment to its traditional ideals and programs in August 1966. Young said that he would shun involvement in what he saw as a pointless dispute over the value of a slogan that even its originators had not clearly defined.

In the final analysis, the success or failure of Black Power seemingly depends not so much on the views of the scholars and the activists, but on the conception and the reality of the term in so far as the masses of black Americans were concerned. How would they interpret the concept, and would they abandon their traditional loyalties and strategies to embrace it?

Until the civil rights era, only a few systematic opinion polls were conducted among the rank and file of the black population. Too often the views of black spokesmen or black leaders were taken as representative of

the entire African American population in the United States. Like many other things, since the era of black disillusionment and black consciousness, the idea of a few spokesmen for blacks is rapidly waning. Consequently, there are polls and studies reflecting a much wider cross section of black opinion. One such study, concerning the meaning of Black Power, was conducted in Detroit in 1967. A random sample of 461 blacks was involved in the survey. In the question, "What do the words 'black power' mean to you?" 22.6 percent of the blacks said "Black Unity"; 22.3 percent said "Nothing"; 19.6 percent said a "Fair Share for Black People"; 8.5 percent said it meant the "Blacks Rule Whites"; 6.5 percent said "ridicule, obscenity, abhorrence"; 4.1 percent said "Trouble, Rioting, Civil Disorder"; 3.9 percent defined it as "Racism"; and 4.3 percent gave various other comments. The authors of the study, Joel Auerbach and Jack L. Walker (1970), concluded that the blacks were almost evenly divided in their interpretation of the controversial slogan. Roughly 42.2 percent of the blacks, they found, were "clearly favorable to black power," while 49.6 percent defined it "in an unfavorable way." Those blacks who were favorable to Black Power saw it "as another call for a fair share for blacks or as a rallying cry for black unity," while those who were negatively inclined saw it as "empty and meaningless" or "nothing."

In the spring of 1975, this author conducted a similar but much smaller random survey among blacks in Atlanta, Georgia. The twenty respondents included a 65-year-old high school teacher, seven high school students, five college students, two internship program administrators, an attorney, a steel worker, a college professor, a cook, and a domestic worker. In the Atlanta survey, 80 percent of the blacks were clearly favorable to Black Power, while 20 percent defined it in an unfavorable way. Interestingly enough, three-fourths of those who viewed the concept negatively held lower-income jobs. Almost all of the students and professional people saw the concept in a positive vein. While the Atlanta blacks defined Black Power variously, the most common responses included the idea of black unity and the notions of economic self-sufficiency and political control of black communities and institutions.

During three months of the summer of 1966, Joyce Ladner, then a civil rights worker, conducted a study aimed "at finding out how Mississippi

Negroes who endorsed ‘black power’ interpreted this new concept.” She learned that “even those civil rights activists who welcomed the concept attached curiously different meanings to it.” Among her thirty respondents, Ladner found political control of black communities and institutions as the definition of Black Power. She further found that frustration, primarily with the course of the Civil Rights Movement, drew her respondents to Black Power.

New Scholarly Studies of Black Power

In the post-civil-rights era, probably in anticipation of the fortieth anniversary of the Meredith march in 2006, Matthew Countryman, Akinyele Umoja, Duchess Harris, Hasan Jeffries, Lance Hill, Adolph Reed, Jeffrey O. G. Ogbar, Kimberly Springer, Williams, and other scholars have revisited the concept of Black Power. Some have embraced earlier meanings, while others have offered fresh analyses. Some have expanded discussions of the integration of the Black Power movement with the Civil Rights Movement, the Pan-African aspects of Black Power, the role of gender and class in the movement, and the pivotal place of self-defense as exemplified by the NAACP’s Robert Williams in North Carolina, the Deacons for Defense in Louisiana, and the Black Panther Party. There has also been a renewed emphasis on Black Power activities in the North and Black Power’s role in African American culture as well as its multicultural impacts. The best synthesis of this New Black Power historiography is Peniel Joseph’s (2006) *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights–Black Power Era*.

As to the theory and practice of Black Power, some of the more recent pronouncements of activists and the new Black Power historiography suggest that it has already been achieved. For others, the struggle to attain it still goes on. For some, its achievement is an impossibility.

Alton Hornsby Jr.

See also [African Political Thought](#); [American Political Thought](#); [Equality and Egalitarianism](#); [Ethnicity and Political Thought](#); [Freedom of](#)

[Expression](#); [Liberalism](#); [Rights](#), [Natural and Human](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Pamela Pilbeam Pamela Pilbeam

Blanc, Louis

Blanc, Louis

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Blanc, Louis

Louis Blanc (1811–82) was the first known socialist in any country to hold a government post. The son of a legitimist French official who lost his pension after the 1830 revolution, Blanc secured a scholarship at the *collège* in Rodez. His direct, simple style and useful connections (his first job was tutor to the children of Frédéric Desgeorges, liberal notable and newspaper editor in the Pas-de-Calais) quickly allowed him to become a leading radical journalist. Writing first in 1834 for the *Bon Sens*, a weekly paper for workers, in 1839 he helped found *La Revue du progrès politique, social et littéraire*. In 1840, a selection of his articles became a book, *L'Organisation du travail*. Within two weeks, 3,000 copies were sold; the next printing did well, probably helped by a government confiscation order. Quoting statistical evidence of poverty published by Ange Guépin, Louis-René Villermé, and Eugène Buret, Blanc argued that free competition, much vaunted by liberal economists, was enslaving workers, especially women. The economy would be controlled eventually by a tiny minority of the most ruthless employers. His solution was worker cooperatives, not unlike those set up by Philippe Buchez and Pierre Leroux, but financed by the state, the “the banker of the poor” as Blanc put it. Once initial government loans had been repaid, the cooperatives would be autonomous. Victor Considérant and the Fourierists were advocating a similar concept, although Blanc did not acknowledge this. By 1848, five editions of Blanc’s book had appeared, each fatter as he refuted his critics who pointed out that social workshops would also be competitive and thus oppressive.

Blanc helped launch the powerful radical daily, *La Réforme*, which promoted both social and suffrage reform before 1848. He wrote a five volume influential critique of the Orleanist regime, *Histoire de dix ans* (1841–44), and published two books of his fifteen-volume pro-Robespierre history of the 1789 revolution. Unlike Étienne Cabet and the Fourierists, he did not try either to create a socialist movement around himself, or set up worker associations. Up to 1848, Blanc was a popularizer and synthesizer.

The February revolution in 1848 seemed to offer an opportunity to radicals and socialists to find solutions to the social question. Blanc joined the republican provisional government along with other journalists from *La Réforme* and *Le National*. As secretary of the Workers' and Employers' Luxembourg Commission, appointed by the government to advise on the economic crisis, Blanc persistently but vainly urged the ministers to adopt his notion of social workshops. They preferred traditional National Workshops, which provided little more than a tiny dole. Blanc's commission managed to arbitrate industrial disputes in the capital and organize a couple of workshops, one of which made the embroidery for national guard uniforms, but his radicalism worried his fellow republican ministers.

Like other radicals, Blanc was alarmed at the lack of a republican majority in the new Constituent Assembly, despite its being elected by direct universal male suffrage for the first time ever. Blanc participated in the workers' march to the Assembly on May 15, 1848, whose ostensible motive was to encourage government support for revolutions abroad, notably in Poland. The big issue, however, was the fate of the government's workshops, which by May had over 100,000 members and seemed to the conservative majority in the new Assembly both an ideological and a physical threat as well as a financial burden. After some delay, the Assembly decreed their closure. The resulting worker rebellion in June was somewhat unjustifiably blamed on Blanc, who had fled to London after the May fiasco. The divisions among radicals about the form of the new republic, plus the lack of majority support for a republic among voters, contributed to the election of Napoleon's nephew as president and the subsequent reinvention of an empire. Although Blanc had fused a number of socialist strands into his own pet projects, his intransigence and self-

conceit in the spring of 1848 helped to isolate him and divide radical reformers.

In enforced residence in London until 1870, Blanc might have been a uniting focus, but he spent his time constantly reiterating his own solutions and arguing with fellow socialists and republicans. Although more of his writing was translated into English than that of other French socialists, he does not seem to have established as much contact with English radicals and Owenites as did the Fourierists. He opposed the Commune of 1871 and was elected to the new National Assembly where he sat as an elder statesman. He was regarded as an inspiration for the radical socialist movement that emerged at the turn of the century. Probably the best-known socialist in his day, he has been the least remembered in recent years.

Pamela Pilbeam

See also [Fourier, Charles](#); [French Political Thought](#); [French Revolution, Political Thought of the](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Radicalism](#); [Republicanism](#); [Revolution](#); [Socialism](#)

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Patrick H. Hutton Patrick H. Hutton

Blanqui, Louis-Auguste

Blanqui, Louis-Auguste

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Blanqui, Louis-Auguste

Louis-Auguste Blanqui (1805–81) was a nineteenth-century French republican activist and a legendary revolutionary insurgent. He was born in Puget-Théniers in southern France, the son of a minor official in Napoleon's government. To give him every advantage, his parents sent him as an adolescent to Paris for study at the *lycée* Charlemagne. A bright student, he subsequently enrolled in both the faculties of law and of medicine at the University of Paris, though he never earned a degree. Instead, he became involved in the republican opposition to the restored Bourbon monarchy (1814–30), both as journalist and conspirator in the secret societies of that era.

Blanqui played a significant role in the politics of insurrection in Paris throughout much of the mid-nineteenth century. He participated in all of the popular revolutionary days save that of the Commune—1830, 1832, 1839, 1848, and 1870. He founded a series of secret societies during the 1830s, staged a spectacular if unsuccessful uprising in Paris in 1839, and gained notoriety as a club orator and political organizer during the early months of the revolution of 1848. Over the years, he was several times convicted of sedition and sentenced to lengthening prison terms by a succession of political regimes. In all, he endured some forty-three years of confinement with an ascetic self-discipline that held his admirers in awe. Famous as the youthful *insurgé* (rebel), he in time came to be known reverentially as *l'enfermé* (the imprisoned one).

As a legendary insurrectionist, Blanqui mesmerized a following of republican youth, restless under the imperial regime of Napoleon III during the 1860s. His role in his later years was as their mentor, though he briefly reentered public life as journalist, agitator, and national guard commander during the Franco-Prussian War (1870–71). His followers played a leading role in the insurrectionary Paris Commune (Spring 1871).

In old age, Blanqui's image was transfigured once more. He became the emblem of the movement for the amnesty of the Communards and was elected to the Chamber of Deputies of the Third Republic in 1879 as the personification of that cause. By then, the notion of revolution as popular insurrection was losing its force, and Blanqui had come to be respected by republicans far beyond his immediate entourage as the grand old man of a waning revolutionary tradition. He died on New Year's Day 1881 after collapsing at a political rally.

Blanqui's legend was appropriated by the twentieth-century French Communist Party, which cast him as a romantic precursor of scientific socialism. But this interpretation neglects realities in his life that shaped his thinking about politics and society. Having come of age during the Bourbon restoration, when the authority of the church and the old-regime nobility was once more prominent, his quarrel was more with religious obscurantism and aristocratic privilege than with capitalist exploitation of the working class. Blanqui was a republican, an ardent French nationalist, a champion of the oppressed, and a fighter for social justice. The French Revolution as the model for popular uprisings remained essential to his thinking about change. He never developed a coherent social philosophy, for his writings consisted largely of newspaper articles and short essays that dealt with insurrectionary tactics and current political controversies rather than abstract theoretical issues. Blanqui kept his distance from Karl Marx and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, and forbade his followers to participate in the incipient First Workingmen's International during the 1860s. Rather he drew his political ideas from his atheistic stance on life. Central to his convictions was the idea of living courageously in the face of immediate challenges, without recourse to God or master. From a political standpoint, that motto meant maintaining one's resolve in the struggle against social injustice by appealing to empowering historical precedents, notably those of

the French Revolution. History is not about progress, he argued, but the eternal return to inspiring sources. For Blanqui, the key to revolution turned on the ability of a dedicated vanguard to awaken the latent willpower of the people to rise up against their oppression.

L'Eternité par les astres (1872), Blanqui's last, longest, and arguably most significant essay, reads as a serene reflection on redemption through the cycles of the eternal return. Like the sidereal movements of the heavens, the revolutionary movement will rise again. Blanqui's notion of the future redemption of seemingly lost causes provided consolation for the literary critic Walter Benjamin in his reflections on the plight of the political left in Europe in the face of Nazi aggression during the 1930s.

Patrick H. Hutton

See also [Communism, Varieties of](#); [Dictatorship of the Proletariat](#); [French Political Thought](#); [French Revolution, Political Thought of the](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Republicanism](#); [Revolution](#); [Socialism](#)

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Vincent Geoghegan Vincent Geoghegan

Bloch, Ernst

Bloch, Ernst

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Bloch, Ernst

Ernst Bloch (1885–1977) was a German philosopher and social critic who sought to develop a Marxism that was self-consciously utopian, thereby resisting the strong current of antiutopianism in that ideology that could trace its roots to the work of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Bloch studied at the universities of Munich, Würzburg, Berlin, and Heidelberg and came into contact with teachers such as Theodor Lipps, Georg Simmel, and Max Weber. He first came to prominence with *The Spirit of Utopia* ([1918] 2000), a potent brew of unorthodox Christianity, cultural (particularly musical) criticism, expressionist prose, and a deeply messianic utopian leftism. Bloch maintained that the roots of his philosophy lay in his discovery of the concept *not yet* (*noch nicht*) in 1907, a term he was to use in a variety of ways in the rest of his work but all linked to a sense of the future struggling to emerge out of the present and the past.

Marxism is merely one ingredient in *The Spirit of Utopia*, but as the 1920s progressed, Bloch increasingly began to define himself as a Marxist and to root his utopian philosophy in this ideological tradition. Politically, he became a vocal defender of the Soviet Union to the extent of publishing a defense of the Moscow show trials in 1937. Domestically, he sought to understand the emergence of fascism in Germany in works such as *Heritage of Our Times* ([1935] 1991) where he highlighted the ability of National Socialism to use and corrupt the hopes and dreams of a variety of social classes, phenomena that the left failed to comprehend. As a Jew and a

Marxist, Bloch's days were numbered in Germany, and he narrowly escaped arrest, finally finding refuge in the United States in 1938.

In his American exile, Bloch worked on what most commentators consider to be his master-piece—*The Principle of Hope* ([1938–47] 1986). It is a work on an epic scale spread over three volumes and (in the English translation) over fourteen hundred pages. Essentially, it is a study of the utopian from a variety of angles, ranging from the philosophical to the historical and from the cultural to the political, all in the service of a Marxist commitment to human flourishing. Thus, there are sections on “little daydreams,” the flights of fancy that all individuals engage in; on the nature of “anticipatory consciousness,” or where hope comes from; on “wishful images in the mirror,” expressions of hope to be found in such varied phenomena as fashion, fairy tales, travel, and film; on “outlines of a better world,” the various utopias that humans have dreamed up over the centuries; and on “wishful images of the fulfilled moment,” the most powerful conceptions of the truly human found in the sublime resources of art and religion. It thus expands the concept of the utopian beyond the rational polities and shining cities of Thomas More and his successors to encompass the manifold forms in which humanity searches for something better.

In 1948, Bloch accepted the offer of Chair in Philosophy at Leipzig in East Germany (his first academic appointment thus came only in his mid sixties). Although his appointment was clearly facilitated by his pro-Soviet, pro-communist background, Bloch was to fall foul of the East German party-state that began to see linkages between his idiosyncratic Marxism and oppositional currents, particularly among his students. He was removed from teaching, endured stinging criticisms from the press, and came close to imprisonment. In 1961, while on a visit to West Germany, the Berlin Wall began to be constructed, and he decided to stay in the west, becoming, until his death in 1977, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Tübingen.

His last decade and a half, when he was in his eighties and nineties, saw the publication of a number of works in which he continued to develop and refine his theoretical system. He produced a book on natural law (*Natural Law and Human Dignity*), one on his long-standing preoccupation with the

radical potential of Christianity (*Atheism in Christianity*) with its teasing and provocative claim that “only an atheist can be a good Christian; only a Christian can be a good atheist,” and his final work *Experimentum Mundi*.

Bloch’s engaging exploration of such a wide range of disciplines and phenomena has always attracted a highly varied readership. Currently there is a growing use of his work among those who have a scholarly and/or political interest in utopianism, while there has also been a renewed interest in his radical analysis of religion as the question of the relationship between religion and politics has acquired a new salience in the contemporary world.

Vincent Geoghegan

See also [Alienation](#); [Communism](#); [Varieties of](#); [German Political Thought](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Russian Revolution](#); [Political Thought of the](#); [Socialism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [Utopianism](#); [Weber, Max](#)

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Fiona Lean Fiona Lean

Bolívar, Simón

Bolívar, Simón

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Bolívar, Simón

Unlike many of the great political thinkers such as Francois-Marie Arouet Voltaire and Montesquieu, whose radical ideas were published in novels or expansive treatises written over many years, Simón Bolívar's (1783–1830) political thoughts are contained in a relatively short series of public documents. Rather than electing to write them as a social or political observer, he was driven to put his ideas on paper while conducting and participating in the struggle to liberate South America from Spanish domination. His ideas were not new; many of them are to be found in classical Greek and Roman culture and in the literature of the Age of Enlightenment. His genius was in putting them together in such a way that his vision for postrevolutionary society could clearly be seen. Neither a career politician, military man, nor what could be called a member of the intelligentsia, when the situation demanded, he demonstrated that he had a profound grasp of the problems the colonies faced and the determination and tenacity to implement his ideas. This ability can be attributed to his upbringing and education; although during that period of his life, his youthful actions and behavior showed no signs of the traits that would mark him out as a world political visionary or earn him the sobriquet Liberator.

Bolívar was born in Caracas into a wealthy and powerful family of Spanish descent. The Bolívar lifestyle was steeped in the Spanish tradition, although the idea of separatism was gaining ground among the upper echelons of South American society. His father died when he was three. The young Bolívar was intelligent but hyperactive and disruptive, and even though he

had a series of distinguished tutors, among them Andres Bello, the Venezuelan poet and legislator, he was difficult to teach. Just before Bolívar's mother died in 1792, she engaged the services of Simón Rodríguez, a radical thinker whose educational methods were based on Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Emile*. Rodriguez removed Bolívar from the schoolroom in Caracas to the family ranch where the boy thrived on a regime of Spartan simplicity. Under Rodriguez's tutelage, academic study included an exposure to philosophy, which, in Bolívar's words, "formed my heart for liberty, for justice, for the great, for the beautiful."

After five years under Rodriguez' guidance, Bolívar was sent to cadet school in Madrid to complete his education. There he concentrated on riding and swordsmanship at the expense of academia but read voraciously, being particularly drawn to philosophically and politically liberal writers such as Voltaire, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Claude Adrien Helvétius, Guillaume Thomas Raynal, and John Locke. At the age of nineteen, deeply in love, he married María Teresa Rodríguez del Toro y Alaiza in Madrid. Together they returned to Venezuela, but she died of yellow fever within the year. In despair, he returned to Europe and sought solace in a dissipated life. In London, he joined the Gran Reunion Americana Club, founded by Francisco de Miranda and frequented by South American notables intent on independence. The political atmosphere of the time was influenced by the breakaway of the United States from England (1783) and the rise of Napoleon following the French Revolution of 1789. Having witnessed Napoleon's coronation in Italy, in the company of Rodriguez, Bolívar swore an oath on the Monte Sacro in Rome to liberate South America. In 1807, he returned to Caracas and immediately became involved in the revolutionary movement.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Spanish empire included much of present-day Central America and western South America. Between 1810 and 1830, Bolívar led a series of revolutions in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela. Initial success was in the Crown's favor, but undaunted, Bolívar began to set down his political thoughts in a series of manifestos, degrees, letters, essays, and so on, such as the *Cartagena Manifesto*, the *Jamaica Letter*, *Decree on the Emancipation of the Slaves*, *Essay on Public Education*, and many more. An admirer of the American

Revolution, he also made frequent references to Greece, Rome, and the contemporary writers of his time. Bolívar was not only a military leader and statesman, but also a philosopher who developed several ideas and texts defending the independence of South America.

He repeatedly points out the advantages of centralism over federalism, which he considers the best form of government but inappropriate in an immature democracy. He also stressed that the driving force of those who seek public office should be for the good of the nation, not for the quest for power. His writings reveal that he believed passionately in the sovereignty of the people and government that guaranteed freedom, justice, and equality to all. Although he sacrificed much to bring about the society he envisaged and had dreamed of a united Latin America, his influence waned at the end of his life, and in 1830, he resigned the presidency of Venezuela. He died in penury, knowing that he was leaving behind a country governed by warlords and oligarchs in place of the despotism he fought so hard to defeat.

Fiona Lean

See also [Empire and Political Thought](#); [Latin American Political Thought](#); [Liberalism](#); [Revolution](#)

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Sandro Chignola Sandro Chignola

Bolshevism

Bolshevism

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Bolshevism

See Russian Revolution, Political Theory of

Sandro Chignola Sandro Chignola

Bonald, Louis De

Bonald, Louis De

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Bonald, Louis De

French politician and philosopher Louis Gabriel Ambroise, Viscount of Bonald, was born in 1754 into a noble family of Rouergue and educated by the Oratorian fathers. After his military service as a musketeer and his marriage to Élisabeth de Combescure, he became mayor of Millau (1785). During the early stages of the French Revolution, Bonald was elected to the departmental Assembly of Aveyron. He emigrated to Heidelberg after the passing of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy (1791), seeing this as an intolerable attack on his religious beliefs. On his return to France, he began to take part in the cultural life of his country under Napoleon, who appreciated his works published while in exile. He collaborated in the *Mercure de France* and associated with Louis Mathieu Molé and François-René de Chateaubriand. He enjoyed great success in the Restoration period for his strenuous defense of the monarchy. In 1815, he presented a bill against divorce. In 1816, Bonald was elected to the Académie Française as the successor of Jean-Jacques Cambacérès. He served as Member of Parliament in the Chambre from 1815 to 1822, and was nominated Peer of France in 1823. The Revolution of 1830 put an end to his political career. Bonald died in 1840.

His political thought was expressed and set out in numerous works with a strongly unequivocal theoretical foundation. The historical order is an order of rational relationships willed by God, who does not intervene in them in order not to disturb their regularity. Man cannot create a constitution just as he cannot add length to a body or weight to matter. Power is willed by God,

guarantor of earthly order. It gives historical concreteness to a metaphysical law that requires that every relationship between beings be constructed as the result of a causal action. Between cause and effect (between God and creature, between power and subject) there must intervene, as a kind of mediation, a means that transmits the causal action (the Christ). As outlined in Bonald's *Théorie du pouvoir politique et religieux dans la société civile*, published in 1796, the political equivalent of this theological pattern is double legitimation, in counterrevolutionary terms, of monarchical *auctoritas* (a causal form of power, which cannot derive from a social contract) and nobility (the medium and hinge of government action), in relation to the expectations of the populace, whose well-being and maintenance represent the sole object of the political exchange.

The mathematical formula that transcribes this relationship (*Pouvoir: Ministre = Ministre: Sujet*) can be used to develop a system (Bonald calls it a "système de la société") in which every political and social relationship can be interpreted as a specific enforcement case of a causal relationship unitarily expressed by the algorithm of power (*Essai analytique sur les lois naturelles de l'ordre social*, 1800). There is therefore no socialization circuit (family, civil society, the State) that is not bound to power, that can be conceived as separate from it (as in liberal models), or that can subsist without being ordered and maintained by it. Man is historically bound to a tradition that conserves this premise as primitive legislation. For this attempt at synthesis between historical analysis and social science, and for the overcoming of rationalist individualism that postulates the social relationship as deductible from the will, Bonald, in critical history, has often been interpreted, apart from his ideological position, as the precursor of sociology. His theory of a divine revelation of language as a precondition to the individual exercise of thought stands in contradiction to the empiricism of the eighteenth century. Clearly thus conflicting with the philosophy of the *Idéologues*, this scheme inserts the individual into a system of mediations and of preexisting political and social relationships that include him and, therefore, deprive him of sovereign claims. For this and for his savage criticism of the French Revolution, Bonald is considered one of the founders of political conservatism.

Sandro Chignola

See also [Conservatism](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [French Political Thought](#); [French Revolution](#), [Political Thought of the](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#)

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William Sweet William Sweet

Bosanquet, Bernard

Bosanquet, Bernard

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Bosanquet, Bernard

Bernard Bosanquet was born on July 14, 1848, near Alnwick, Northumberland, England, and died in London on February 8, 1923. He studied at Harrow (1862–67) and at Balliol College, Oxford (1867–70), where he was influenced by Edward Caird and T. H. Green. Upon graduation in 1870, Bosanquet was elected to a Fellowship at University College, Oxford, where he taught logic and the history of moral philosophy. Following the receipt of an inheritance in 1881, Bosanquet gave up teaching and left for London where he became prominent in adult education and social reform. In 1895, he married Helen Dendy, an influential social worker and, later, a principal member of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws (1905–09).

A major figure in the Idealist movement in Britain, Bosanquet came to have a leading role in philosophy, publishing on a wide range of topics. He also had key roles in the Charity Organization Society from the late 1880s until the early 1920s. In 1903, he returned to professorial life as Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of St Andrews in Scotland but soon retired in 1908 to return to writing and social work. Despite challenges to his views from both within and outside the academic world, Bosanquet was acknowledged by the *Times* as “the central figure” of British philosophical and political thought. He received a number of honors and awards and was made a Fellow of the British Academy (1907). He died in his 75th year on February 8, 1923.

Bosanquet's political thought was influenced not only by Green and Caird, but also by classical Greek philosophy and the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Immanuel Kant, and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel.

Responding not only to the empiricism and materialism of Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, and Herbert Spencer, but also to political, economic, and social issues of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Bosanquet articulated a liberal political philosophy that sought to avoid both individualism and collectivism. It is called idealist because of Bosanquet's view that social relations and institutions are not ultimately material phenomena, but best understood as existing at the level of human consciousness. He is considered to be one of the most Hegelian of the British Idealists, though the extent of Hegel's influence has been debated.

Bosanquet's political thought is to be found principally in *The Philosophical Theory of the State* ([1899] 2001), the 4th edition of which appeared shortly after his death (1923). His views engaged reformers such as the philanthropist and social researcher Charles Booth, the Fabian socialists Sidney and Beatrice Webb, and New Liberals such as John A. Hobson and Leonard Trelawny Hobhouse. His work shows similarities to that of many of his fellow idealists (notably Green, D. G. Ritchie, William Wallace, John Watson, and to a lesser degree, F. H. Bradley), but his political philosophy is by far the most extensive and systematic—and was the principal target of Hobhouse's *The Metaphysical Theory of the State* (1918).

Bosanquet's central themes were the basis of political authority and political obligation, the role of the citizen in the community, and the nature and limits of the state. Key notions here are the individual, the general will, "the best life," society, and the state—notions that are importantly related to his metaphysics and logic.

To have a coherent account of political authority, Bosanquet argued, one must abandon certain notions usually associated with the liberal tradition, especially individualism. Bosanquet regarded political authority and the state as natural and as expressions of what he called the real or general will—and based neither on individual consent, a social contract, nor de facto recognition of sovereignty. He saw a relation between this real will and the

common good that is its object and that he identified with the best life —“the existence and the perfection of human personality.” So far as the state reflects the general will and this common good, it has authority and citizens are obliged to obey.

For Bosanquet, the well-being of the individual is inseparable from the community. Liberty is essential to the development of moral character, but there is no incompatibility between liberty and the law. Individuals are social beings, and there are substantive social ends or a common good within the community. One’s rights are based on one’s station or function in the state, and the duties that follow from it.

Bosanquet described the role of the state as the hindrance of hindrances to the best life. The state employs restraint and force and is absolute because society requires a coordination of activities; it is the flywheel of social life. While there were no a priori restrictions on state action, there were a number of practical limitations. The state cannot directly promote morality —this idea reflects the influence of Kant—and he believed that social progress could often be best achieved by volunteer action. Strictly speaking, there are no rights against the state, but where social institutions are corrupt, there can be a duty to resist. Bosanquet held out hope for an organized system of international law, and he saw the League of Nations as reflecting the beginnings of a genuine community of humanity.

Bosanquet’s political thought has been challenged for being too metaphysical, ahistorical, and unaware of concrete economic reality, too narrow and negative, too individualistic (and paradoxically, as devaluing the individual), prone to quietism, and serving to legitimate the status quo. Such attacks have been addressed in discussions (Nicholson 1990; Sweet 1997, 2007; McBriar 1987), and recent studies confirm that Bosanquet was an active Liberal. He held that the state can have a positive role in the promotion of social well-being, was in favor of worker ownership, and in the 1910s, supported the Labour Party. His familiarity with political, economic, and social issues led Adam Ulam to note that *The Philosophical Theory of the State* “has a comprehensiveness and an awareness of conflicting political and philosophical opinions which give it a supreme importance . . . Bosanquet is both a political theorist and a political analyst”

(Ulam 1951, 50). Bosanquet's view of the individual, the common good, and the role of the state seem to be echoed in recent writings by Charles Taylor and William Galston, and several writers have found his work relevant to the recent liberal-communitarian debate.

William Sweet

See also [Citizenship](#); [Communitarianism and Liberalism](#); [Fabianism](#); [French Political Thought](#); [General Will](#); [Green, Thomas Hill](#); [Hobhouse, Leonard Trelawny](#); [Hobson, John Atkinson](#); [Idealism](#); [Kant, Immanuel](#); [Liberalism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Obedience, Political](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [State, Theories of the](#)

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B. Guy Peters B. Guy Peters

Bureaucracy

Bureaucracy

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Bureaucracy

Formal organizations responsible for implementing public programs are as old as government itself. Studies of ancient empires such as those by Eisenstadt and Finer identify large formal organizations as central to the governance capacity of those governing systems. Although many members of these organizations were selected for personal loyalty to the monarch or on the basis ascriptive criteria, some such as the Chinese Mandarins were selected on the basis of merit and had the prospect of a lifetime career. These organizations were some of the earliest modern organizations in the public sector.

The Nature of Bureaucracy

Although the utilization of formal organizations to implement public policies is as old as government, the term *bureaucracy* is not as old. The term is usually associated with the late nineteenth-, early twentieth-century German social theorist Max Weber. Weber described bureaucracy in light of his theories about social development and particularly the shift of legitimation from traditional to charismatic to rational legal forms. Rational legal authority represented the highest form of development and modernity, and the bureaucracy was the organizational format associated with that type of authority. Although usually associated with the public sector, private sector organizations may have many of the same bureaucratic characteristics.

Bureaucracy, therefore, is to some extent a general conception of governing as well as a theory of organization, although it is discussed most often as a theory of organization. As a theory of organization, bureaucracy has a number of components, for example, recruitment by merit, a full-time job and a lifetime career, formal rules, and organizational memory contained in files. The name *bureaucracy* was derived from the French *bureau* and its many drawers. Thus, a bureaucracy is a structure that is highly differentiated with a number of offices and positions, all linked by hierarchical controls and rules.

These attributes combine to create organizations in which the individual bureaucrat willingly suspended his or her judgment in favor of accepting the rules and the hierarchical controls from the leadership of the organization. In so doing, the bureaucrat was able to treat clients *sine irae ac studio*, that is, according to strict legal guidelines rather than according to personal whims. This equality was to be seen in contrast to treatment of citizens differently according to ascriptive criteria such race or gender, or according to their political affiliations as in traditional or charismatic forms of governing.

Weber's conception of the bureaucracy was an ideal type, meaning that it was intended as an intellectual model rather than as an abstraction from reality. Therefore, perhaps no organization has ever been a full-fledged bureaucracy. Empirical studies such as Stanley H. Udy's (1958) have identified organizations with many of the attributes but few if any that attained the goal of being a complete bureaucracy. As an intellectual device, however, the concept constitutes both a set of categories for organizational analysis and an attempt to embody how a modern organization would look and perform. By comparing existing organizations with that model, we can understand how they are likely to function and how they relate to one particular conception of modernity.

The words *bureaucracy* and *bureaucratic* are usually considered pejorative, indicating organizations that are excessively rigid, dominated by red tape, and slow to respond to the needs of the public. The original intent of the bureaucratic model of organization, however, was more positive. For example, this form of organization would treat individuals—both

employees and clients—with strict equality rather than on particularistic grounds. The emphasis on formal, knowable rules and the existence of files were mechanisms to enhance the transparency of organizations so that clients and citizens could know what procedures were being followed and where their particular case was in that process. Not all public organizations are in reality that open, but that is less the fault of the model than of the individuals who implement it.

Critiques of Bureaucracy

The concept of bureaucracy has been critiqued from a number of perspectives. First, the concept has been criticized on normative grounds because it requires individuals to suspend their own judgments about what is right and wrong and to follow the rules of the organization. The normative critique was especially strong after World War II when the consequences of individuals failing to make moral judgments became vividly apparent. Even in less extreme circumstances, individual public servants are faced with important choices that require them to make moral and legal judgments.

Such a standard for behavior makes it more likely that people will “just follow orders,” and it also dehumanizes the individual public servants working within those organizations. The Weberian bureaucrat in the extreme may be reduced to an automaton who does not have any latitude to make decisions and who is not responsible for any decisions. This model of organizations assumes that individuals do not want autonomy and/or responsibility; they are willing to accept security rather than pursue the opportunity to maximize their own skills and their contributions to the organization. In the contemporary world, these assumptions about individuals appear extremely dehumanizing, but in the time at which Weber wrote, they were prevalent.

Not only do the assumptions about human nature have normative consequences, they can also affect the manner in which the organization performs its tasks. As a theory of organizations and management, bureaucracy seems best suited to organizations that perform simple repetitive tasks and that have limited direct contact with the public. These

“machine organizations,” as Mintzberg (1983) called them, are capable of coping with tasks such as issuing licenses or paying monthly pensions but are incapable of coping with greater complexity or uncertainty. Likewise, the so-called classical approach to public organizations that grew out of bureaucracy also focused on relatively simple principles for managing organizations, again assuming that the individuals within the organizations did not want to make decisions on their own and that the organization did not need that flexibility.

Although the bureaucratic form may be capable of coping with repetitive tasks, it may not be as efficient in managing those functions as Weber had assumed. Almost all public programs, or indeed private activities, involve discretion, and an organization that attempts to either deny or to suppress discretion is unlikely to be successful in achieving its tasks. Further, the clients of such an organization are unlikely to be treated as mere cases and therefore may demand more consideration from their service providers. Also, bureaucracy and rules are inherently incapable of managing the complex regulatory and policy-making functions that now are central to the work of the public sector.

Somewhat paradoxically, the equality of treatment that bureaucracy was designed to create is satisfying neither to the providers nor to the recipients. Individual public servants want some latitude to make their own decisions and the clients want their special circumstances recognized and responded to. Rather than the virtues of equality and predictability that advocates of bureaucracy may see, clients see rigidity and formality. This frustration with formal organizations and the dominance of rules is especially apparent at the street level, where public employees confront citizens who want better and more considerate treatment.

The dissatisfaction with the bureaucratic model on both normative and empirical grounds has generated a number of alternative approaches to understanding organizations and especially, organizations in the public sector. The first of these to emerge was the human relations approach, arguing that organizations would perform better if the individuals within them were treated more as individuals than as cogs in a bureaucratic machine. This strand of thought constitutes, in various guises, the basis of

most contemporary organization theory; although unlike bureaucracy, it expresses relatively less concern with the clients of organizations than with the employees of the organizations.

Herbert Simon (1947) and the decision-making approach to organizations was a reaction to both bureaucracy and classical organization theory. Simon argued that the mechanistic nature of bureaucracy, and the simple platitudes of classical administrative theory, were incapable of coping with the complex and competing demands of organizations within the public sector. Therefore, to understand organizational behavior, we need to understand the manner in which decisions are made and the premises on which those decisions are made. Further, Simon and his associates (March and Olsen 1989) argued that the decisions taken were conditioned by the values, routines, and symbols of the organizations to which the individual belongs so that decisions did not represent rational decisions that would maximize individual utility but rather reflected bounded rationality.

The most extreme rejection of the bureaucracy model for public administration can be found in the new public management (NPM) (see Hood 1991; Christensen and Lægreid 2001). This approach to public organizations stressed the pursuit of efficiency through the use of managerial principles similar to those used in the private sector. The assumption was that public and private sector management were essentially the same and that government could be improved by using techniques that appeared to have worked in the private sector. Further, the NPM emphasized the role of the manager in creating that efficiency and de-emphasized or even denigrated political influences over policy and management.

In many ways the new public management is the antithesis of bureaucracy. For example, as Peters (2004) notes, while bureaucracy was built on rules, internal deregulation is one of the principal methods of NPM, with the assumption that strict rules over functions such as budgeting and personnel management prevented effective public managers from achieving their goals. Hierarchy and the control exercised by the managers are important in NPM, but *ex ante* constraints on decisions are considered not only to waste

the skills of talented individuals within public administration, but also to reduce the efficiency and effectiveness of government.

Likewise, rules also prohibited employees at the bottom of public organizations from working effectively with their clients. The logic of the NPM is to serve the customer. This market logic of treating clients differently according to their needs and preferences is in marked contrast to the rule-based equality at the heart of bureaucracy. While the NPM approach may provide the clients of public programs greater choice, it does violate the basic principle of equality in public services. Further, it may advantage the more articulate clients rather than the less advantaged who may need public services more.

Bureaucracy and the NPM also have very different conceptions of public accountability, perhaps the principal democratic element of public administration. For bureaucracy accountability is conceptualized as being enforced *ex ante* and largely within public organizations themselves. Rules and hierarchical authority are assumed to be able to have public employees follow the law and to perform their functions in the public interest. On the other hand, accountability in the NPM is conceptualized as being *ex post*, with managers having the latitude for action but then being assessed on the outcomes. This process also shifts the conception of accountability more toward outcomes rather than on compliance with rules.

Despite the numerous attempts to generate alternatives to bureaucracy, and despite the numerous problems inherent in the bureaucratic form of organization, it continues to reappear as a model for the public sector (see Du Gay 2004; Olsen 2006). Advocates of the neo-Weberian society argue that the adoption, or re-adoption, of some of the values and practices of Weberian bureaucracy is essential for restoring some of the probity and equality of bureaucracy. The managerial task, therefore, becomes finding ways to marry the search for efficiency associated with the new public management with the accountability of bureaucracy.

In summary, bureaucracy has been and remains a central concept for public administration. The formal organizations associated with bureaucracy were effective in creating equality and adherence to rules but had a number of dysfunctions such as rigidity and an absence of responsiveness. Those

dysfunctions have produced a pervasive negative stereotype of bureaucracy and of government organizations in general. That negative stereotype has been justified in a number of cases, although the positive benefits are often ignored. The numerous alternatives to bureaucracy that have been created have addressed some of the dysfunctions of bureaucracy but have created numerous dysfunctions of their own.

The question for designing public administration, therefore, becomes how to balance these various dysfunctions and positive features in public organizations. As has so often been the case in the design of public administration, there has been a pendulum moving back and forth between more bureaucratic forms and less formalized patterns of management and organization. It appears that some movement back toward bureaucracy is now occurring, after decades of managerialist and decentralizing reforms.

B. Guy Peters

See also [Political Sociology](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Weber, Max](#)

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Edmund Burke (1730–97) is recognized today as one of the founders of conservative political philosophy, although in his own day he enjoyed a reputation as a Whig critic of government policy in domestic, imperial, and foreign affairs. In the early nineteenth century, he was taken up by conservative opponents of franchise reform in Britain; however, he attracted liberals later in the century as a proponent of moderation. This apparent adaptability does not mean that Burke's thought transcends political categorization, but that characterizing him ideologically requires precise historical sensitivity. Burke was not a political philosopher, but a practical politician, forced under pressure of events to respond to political opponents. But while his political thought is thus circumstantial and context-specific, he also framed his positions with due regard to long-term consequences. Most of what has come down to us as his political theory originally took the form of public letters and speeches, but his writings nonetheless aimed at general political understanding. His interventions tackled issues of immediate importance, but these included events of epochal significance.

Burke's career spanned one of the most remarkable periods in British and European history. He lived through and chronicled the events of the Seven Years' War (1756–63). At the same time, he witnessed the establishment of the British Empire in India (1756–65). The American crisis (1765–83), culminating in the loss of the thirteen colonies, began during his first period in public office. As a member of Parliament, he engaged with the great issues in the domestic politics of the day, from the Wilkes affair to the

toleration of religious dissent and demands for constitutional reform. He also addressed imperial disputes ranging from Ireland to Quebec. And finally, he became a central protagonist in the debate on the French Revolution. It was in relation to these issues and events that he elaborated the key doctrines with which he has since been associated—the wisdom of reform as opposed to revolution, the necessity of prudence in political affairs, and the historically rooted character of political rights and duties.

Early Life and Career

Burke was born and educated in Ireland before moving to London to train as a lawyer at the Middle Temple in 1750, but in the mid-1750s he embarked upon a career in journalism and letters. He was soon committed to a number of important literary enterprises, including history, criticism, and political commentary. By the end of the decade, he had published *A Vindication of Natural Society* (1756) and *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757); he had coauthored *An Account of the European Settlements in America* (1758) and started work on *An Essay towards an Abridgement of English History* (1757-?). After a period as secretary to William Gerard Hamilton (1729–96), during which he continued his editorship of the *Annual Register*, he accepted the post of secretary to the Marquis of Rockingham (1730–82) and a seat in the House of Commons in 1765. By that stage, he had already cut a figure in the literary world of London. He had befriended Samuel Johnson (1709–84) and become an intimate of Joshua Reynolds (1723–92); he had encountered David Hume (1711–76) and corresponded with Adam Smith (1723–90). He was an early if cautious disciple of Montesquieu (1689–1755), an antagonist of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78), a critic of Henry St John Bolingbroke (1678–1751) and François-Marie Voltaire (1694–1778), and a reviewer of the Scottish conjectural historians William Robertson (1721–93) and Adam Ferguson (1723–1816).

Burke's career is distinguished by the caliber of his commentary on public affairs. He brought an intelligence steeped in Enlightenment intellectual culture to the controversies in which he intervened. He liked to compare himself to Cicero (106–43 BCE), but the comparison does not quite fit: Burke's positions were not developed after retirement from the public stage,

but in the midst of the cut and thrust of politics and polemic. Nonetheless, his arguments were designed to probe beneath the surface of events. He sought to add philosophical depth and historical reach to contemporary disputes. By the 1790s, he had managed to achieve international renown as an original thinker. Like Montesquieu or James Madison (1751–1836), he strove to develop a theoretical approach to politics. However, as we have seen, his arguments were tied directly to the rhythms of public life. Yet despite the circumstantial character of Burke's doctrines, a pivotal concern connects his interventions in public debate.

Key Political Concerns

Despite his immersion in quotidian affairs, Burke's engagement with public life can be characterized in terms of a central and abiding preoccupation. A proper appreciation of this core concern enables us to uncover the guiding principles that shaped his response to the burning issues of the day beyond the domestic front: that is, issues connected with America, India, Ireland, and France. This pivotal interest focused on the threat posed by the spirit of conquest to modern enlightened political conduct. The spirit of conquest referred to the predominance of naked power politics over the politics of conciliation and consensus. At the extreme limit, as Burke recognized, power politics shaded into military usurpation—the assertion of might as the sole criterion of right. The core of his political thought draws on a historical vision of how Europe overcame the spirit of conquest that dominated life after the fall of the Roman Empire. That vision sought to account for the emergence of constitutional politics at the expense of the spirit of conquest. The modern acquisition of constitutional regulation represented for Burke a high point of civilization that surpassed the finest achievements of the ancients. Nonetheless, modern civilization remained a precarious achievement. It was the job of politics to guard against its collapse under pressure from rival elements within its formation.

Burke saw that the forces that built up postclassical civilization were embodied in the orders and powers that made up modern monarchies and republics. These social orders and forms of power had been variously distinguished from one another and combined into diverse kinds of political systems in the Europe of Burke's day. The success of each of these systems

depended on its capacity to approximate the ideal of the rule of law. But progress toward that ideal rested on the establishment of judicial independence.

Burke believed that the security of judicial independence, along with the peace, justice, and prosperity that security maintained, depended on the preservation of a harmonious arrangement of checks and balances between the elements that composed the political system of which judicial power formed a part. His attention was continually absorbed by the question of the best means of maintaining an optimal balance and the consequences that would follow from disturbing this equilibrium. Serious disturbance risked pitting prevailing political forces against one another, leading to the disintegration of the community into antagonistic factions and the resort to armed contention over the sovereignty of the state. It was Britain's good fortune to have withstood this abysmal fate in the eighteenth century; however, Burke felt sure that France was reverting to militant factionalism in 1789. As a result, he contended that it was with the advent of the French Revolution that the spirit of conquest was dramatically relaunched at the heart of European civilization.

Development of Political Commitments

Burke's preoccupation with the spirit of conquest underwent various developments between the mid-1750s and the mid-1790s. It also provided the framework in which he examined a range of related themes, including despotism and democracy, persecution and fanaticism. His early career down to 1780 amounts to a defense of the balance struck by the Glorious Revolution settlement of 1688, delivering Britain from the threat of civil discord and collapse. The firmness of Burke's commitment to the Glorious Revolution was partly a product of his awareness of how the Revolution settlement had miscarried in Ireland. From Burke's perspective, the settlement in Ireland was less an agent of pacification than the consummation of conquest by constitutional means. However, much of his early reforming zeal derives from his commitment to the British constitution as an instrument of progressive pacification. Its characteristic balance in favor of liberty was a means of reducing precisely the kind of factional hostility that resulted from the Williamite conquest of Ireland.

Down to the Gordon Riots (1780) and the loss of the American colonies (1783), Burke's political priorities consisted in warding off what he took to be the principal threat posed to the fundamental principles of the Revolution settlement at home while extending its civilizing influence abroad.

Policy for the empire was thus formulated in the light of the need to maintain the domestic constitutional balance. From the debates about party and protest in the 1760s down to the American crisis of the mid- to late-1770s, it was the ambitious designs of the monarchy of George III that appeared to pose the greatest danger to political harmony in Britain and by extension, to the stability of the Empire. However, the joint impact of civil unrest at home and the loss of the colonies in America between 1780 and 1783 led Burke toward a radical reappraisal of the sources of political instability. He now feared the rising tide of populism and demagoguery as a potential source of constitutional subversion. The Gordon Riots reminded him of the intensity of persecuting zeal, while the struggle with America made clear the subversive appeal of the doctrine of natural rights.

Both of these developments pointed to the decline of a style of responsible politics rooted in the Revolution settlement of 1688. Burke took the view that this style of politics had been founded on the coordination of relationships among the democratic, aristocratic, and monarchical components of the British constitution. Late in his career, he described this coordination of powers representing the distinct orders and interests of the British state as exemplifying republican government in its accepted sense before the advent of the French republic. Here he had in mind the Ciceronian ideal of a mixed polity dedicated to the security of property and liberty.

However, Burke still believed that both property and liberty had been more securely underpinned in modern states by the survival of the principle of heredity in postfeudal European politics than they ever were in the politics of Greece or Rome. Nonetheless, he further emphasized the fact that the contemporary world was not immune to corruption leading to terminal crisis. The resurgence of the idea of popular rights in the domestic politics of Britain was one sign of the onset of impending crisis. But the corruption of the ideal of mixed or republican government was even more

conspicuous, Burke argued, in the oligarchic politics of the East India Company. More dramatically still, as he began to claim after 1790, the democratic fundamentalism of the French Revolution threatened to extinguish the very idea of a mixed constitutional order.

It was an 18th-century commonplace that the spirit of conquest that dominated ancient politics had been caused by the unstable balance of forces in mixed polities such as that of Rome. It was likewise commonly recognized that the resurgence of that spirit after the fall of Rome was a consequence of the establishment of military aristocracies during the aftermath of the invasion of the German tribes. Burke came to fear that the same spirit threatened to reappear in Europe with the corruption of modern mixed systems of government under pressure from their pure elementary components. While the oligarchic politics of the East India Company had introduced the spirit of conquest into the East, the democratic politics of revolutionary France seemed poised to embark on the reconquest of Europe.

Burke's perspective on the spirit of conquest shows that he was never a critic of empire as such, but a critic of empire based on the spirit of conquest; he was never the enemy of reform in France, but an opponent of reform through revolution. So much is evident from his responses to events in India, America, and France. In the case of India, his views underwent important, even radical shifts. After his early justification in the 1770s of the East India Company's trading monopoly in South Asia in terms of a defense of corporate rights necessary to the maintenance of a Whig balance in the British constitution, Burke came to see the Company's servants as embodying an anachronistic spirit of conquest in a period that he described as "this enlightened age." In connection with America, he thought that the best hope for the future of the American colonies lay within the British Empire, but he also believed that the prospect of a happy resolution of the conflict between colonial rights and monarchical privilege had been damaged from the outset by exaggerated fears of conquest on one side and exaggerated political pretensions on the other. He was never truly a friend to either side in the dispute.

Burke's engagement with France was more complex still. French revolutionary ideology identified France's constitutional arrangements with

various forms of gothic usurpation, but for Burke, the monarchy contained within it the means of its own reform. However, in declaring war on the existing political set up in France, the Revolution inadvertently reintroduced the spirit of conquest into European politics, threatening the continent with military monarchy and Britain with subversion.

Burke first came to the conclusion that the spirit of conquest lingered as a threat over the achievements of modern enlightened politics as a result of the firsthand comparison he was able to make between the political malformation that beset his native Ireland and the relative freedom from sectarian strife that Britain enjoyed in the eighteenth century. The spirit of conquest, he believed, grew out of the spirit of persecution. Whiggism supplied the constitutional means of defusing the energies of this spirit by subjecting the will to conquest to regular political controls. Throughout his career, Burke supported successive means for countering the recrudescence of the spirit of conquest in British, European, and imperial affairs with what might be termed a *politics of conquest* capable of containing its destructive influence.

These assorted attempts to develop cogent political responses to the survival of the spirit of conquest into the age of Enlightenment culminated in the 1790s with Burke's radical conclusion that the militant will to conquest unleashed by the French Revolution could not be tamed, but could only be conquered. This left him demanding a zero-sum confrontation between the counterrevolutionary empire of civilization that he supported and what he represented as the fanatical empire of light and reason that he had watched grow up in France. It is a fascinating irony of Burke's thought that his gospel of Whig moderation culminated in a defense of a doctrine of extreme implacability, beginning with his great work *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) and achieving its final form in his *Letters on a Regicide Peace* (1795–97). It is this aspect of his work that in due course earned him a reputation for being the founding father of modern conservatism. But it contrasts markedly with the tone of his America speeches twenty years earlier. This does not so much point to the existence of contradictory principles in Burke's thinking as to a single interpretation of Whig principle deployed under divergent historical circumstances.

America, India, and France: Dissent, Despotism, and Fanaticism

Between his first public statements on the rights of the American colonists and the publication of his great speech *On American Taxation* (1774), Burke sought to reconcile the principle of colonial freedom with the demands of imperial authority. His repeated public avowal of the delicacy involved in maintaining the Empire upon a plan of Liberty, together with his criticisms of the government in the wake of the introduction of the Townsend Duties (1767) and the Tea Act (1773), gave rise to the mistaken impression in the colonies and at home that Burke was a partisan of natural rights when it came to colonial affairs. It is nonetheless clear that Burke had all along been alarmed by the dissidence of dissent in America. He sought to reconcile this dangerous tendency with the rights of imperial authority by the reestablishment of public trust. This, he contended, could be achieved by a reversion to historic rather than natural rights. Down to 1776, Burke believed that the British constitution still had the capacity to inspire fidelity, and with it subordination, among the American colonists. The restoration of trust required that the constitution of the Empire be reconfigured according to its original principles. But in the midst of the American crisis, Burke also saw that it was trust that was conspicuously absent between the East India Company and its Indian subjects, thus threatening the British Empire, and its claim to justice, in the East.

By the early 1780s, Burke had acquired knowledge of Indian affairs so extensive as to be virtually without comparison among commentators on the subcontinent with the exception of well-placed East India Company servants who had accumulated significant experience of India on the ground. Burke's reading—of histories, pamphlets, and Company records—was enormous; and he had interviewed innumerable participants in Indian politics and commercial activity. On the basis of this research, he came to view the situation in the subcontinent as a product of multiple processes of usurpation. It was, he thought, a product of two distinct styles of conquest. In the first place, India had survived successive waves of Arab, Tartar, and Persian invasion. But the ferocity of these early inundations soon abated, Burke contended; the Asian conquerors made the newly subjugated country

their own. However, things were very different as far as the mode of conquest pursued after the arrival of the East India Company went: now the pacified territories of conquered Hindustan were disrupted by an unremitting despotism imported from the West. The challenge for Burke became one of elaborating the principles and discovering the means capable of holding the Company to account.

Burke's perspective on Company misrule in India was guided by principles that informed his political outlook more generally, not least his basic belief in a providential order of which the gift of terrestrial government formed a part. These principles received their fullest articulation during the impeachment of Warren Hastings, including the preparation of the original articles of charge in the mid-1780s and extending down to the final failure of the prosecution two years before Burke's death in 1795. Throughout this period, Burke appealed to the principles of Christian universalism against the local, geographical morality invoked by Hastings in justification of his conduct in the East. However, this universalism was not employed in support of practical political maxims derived from natural law. In fact, Burke offered a utilitarian defense of the ancient Indian constitution as the most immediately effective means of indicting the arbitrary despotism that he associated with East India Company rule even though it is perfectly plain that he viewed British principles as embodying a higher form of justice. His writings on India show him pitting what he took to be the true principles of a British constitutional politics against the Indianism unleashed by despotic Company rule.

The last ten years of Burke's life were devoted to the exposure and destruction of Indianism and Jacobinism together—twin enemies, from Burke's perspective, of enlightenment and civilization. By the mid-1790s, Burke went so far as to equate the tyranny of Indianism with the rebelliousness of Jacobinism, explaining both in terms of an insatiable appetite for power. Burke took Jacobinism to be both the original inspiration and the driving force behind the Revolution. Accordingly, sometime after the early autumn of 1789, he set about uncovering its inner purpose and motivation. In the mid-1790s, he described it as “the revolt of the enterprising talents of a country against its property,” but he had arrived at that diagnosis as early as February 1790. At that early stage, the

Revolution already appeared to him as an atheistical movement bent upon the establishment of a ruthless democracy.

This dual purpose determined the Revolution's character in Burke's eyes as a revolt against both property and religion. Yet both these objectives seemed wildly counterproductive. From Burke's perspective, the attack on religion would ultimately produce new forms of superstition, while a democracy, which aimed at subverting property, would end in a program of absolute domination. Both irreligion and popular fanaticism were indebted in Burke's mind to what he described in the *Letter to a Member of the National Assembly* (1791) as the "philosophy of vanity." It was Rousseau who stood for Burke as the artful progenitor of modern vanity or self-regard. On this interpretation, the *Confessions* (1782) and the *Reveries* (1782) preached a doctrine of radical self-absorption, hypocritically masking self-regard through protestations of virtue. It was this distinctly modern form of hypocrisy that undermined the influence of shame and honor on the fabric of society. The philosophy of vanity thus fostered systematic unsociability. It helped, in the process, to undermine the sentiment of religion, whose fundamental guiding impulse was the feeling of humility. However, the Revolution could not succeed by proselytizing philosophy alone. It had to appeal to regular passions, like envy and injustice. Together, this medley of emotions led to belligerence and unrest.

Burke was disposed to think of the Revolution as inherently bellicose; even when not actually engaged in combat, revolutionary France was in an apparent state of readiness for war. Two factors placed the country in this position, distinguishing it from all previous belligerents in European history. First, the moving spirit of the Revolution appeared to Burke to be both militant and implacable. Second, even in the absence of a direct military threat, it posed a danger to the other powers of Europe. That danger derived from the infectious proselytism disseminated by the Revolution's chief protagonists. Their commitment to democratic dogma put them at war with the civilized states of Europe. That war, as Burke saw it, was a kind of total war. It could only be brought to an end by destroying the Revolution itself.

Having made his political reputation as an exponent of conciliation, Burke ended his career as Europe's most articulate champion of counterrevolutionary war against France. These dramatically contrasting programs of action are based on a consistent interpretation of a basic political principle whose origins lay in an aversion to the spirit of conquest. The only alternative to conciliating America, Burke saw, was to conquer it, thereby undermining the purposes of the British government. However France after 1789, Burke reckoned, could not be conciliated. The anti-Christian spirit of persecution and demagoguery that imbued the Revolution with its singularity of purpose could neither be diverted nor pacified. Confronted with a political movement that aimed at the subversion of its own principles, Burkean Whiggism revealed the limits of its commitment to moderation. Prudence succumbed to drastic extremes; reform gave way to reaction.

Richard Bourke

See also [Conservatism](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Empire and Political Thought](#); [French Revolution](#); [Political Thought of the](#); [Liberalism](#); [Liberty](#); [Theories of](#); [Revolution](#); [Totalitarianism](#)

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C

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John Caldwell Calhoun (1782–1850) was born in 1782 near Abbeville, South Carolina. His educational opportunities were limited, but after his parents' death and a period of self-education, Calhoun entered Yale College, studying under the arch-Federalist Dr. Timothy Dwight. He later studied for two years under Judge Tapping Reeve at the Litchfield Law School, the most prominent institution devoted to legal training during this period. Returning to his native South Carolina to practice law, he served two terms in the South Carolina Legislature until elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1811. As a member of Congress, Calhoun acquired the reputation as a moral statesman who regarded republicanism and patriotism as synonymous: he supported the War of 1812, he revised James Madison's original national bank proposal and backed limited internal improvements, and he continued to praise a free economy and a regime founded upon "reason and equity" that was surrounded by a world of "fraud, violence or accident."

President James Monroe asked Calhoun to assume the helm at the War Department in 1817, where he served until 1825. Calhoun was generally considered too philosophical for such a practical post, but he accepted the appointment out of a republican sense of duty. In the course of two terms in office, Calhoun completely reorganized and revitalized the War Department and its general staff, resolved its financial problems resulting from the war, and demonstrated a new, more compassionate approach to Native American

affairs. Calhoun also began reforming West Point through a new spirit of openness in terms of admissions and administrative procedures.

A broad spectrum of supporters encouraged Calhoun's candidacy for president in 1824 against his fellow cabinet members William H. Crawford and John Quincy Adams, Speaker of the House Henry Clay, and war hero and newly elected senator, Andrew Jackson. Initially entering the presidential field, Calhoun realized he lacked adequate support and withdrew after Pennsylvania nominated Jackson. Accepting the vice presidential nomination, Calhoun was elected by a large majority. The results in the presidential contest between Jackson and Adams were inconclusive in terms of the electoral and popular vote, and the election was thrown into the House of Representatives where Jackson's nemesis Clay served as speaker. In an unusual series of events, Clay came to Adams's aid, with the House vote securing the election for Adams, who appointed Clay as secretary of state. Many Americans considered the supposed arrangement between Clay and Adams a corrupt bargain. Calhoun believed the bargain had disrupted the balance between preserving liberty and assuming power explicitly reserved to the people. He began to separate himself from what he considered to be Adams's abuses of office and supported General Jackson in 1828. It was as part of this ticket, later known as the Democratic Party, that Calhoun was elected vice president in 1828.

The falling apart of the political union between Calhoun and Jackson is one of the most remarkable events in American politics. Calhoun had hoped Jackson would assume the republican political mantle, but his expectations were not fulfilled. When Jackson decided to seek a second term and selected Martin Van Buren as his vice presidential candidate, several controversies were ignited that raised questions about the corruptibility of the administration.

As a result of the dispute with Jackson, Calhoun resigned as vice president and was elected to the Senate. In an attempt to moderate the crisis posed by tariff-related concerns and the Force Bill in 1832, Calhoun questioned the prospect of preserving the union by force and not relying on the harmonious aggregate of the states. Up to this point in his career as a statesman, Calhoun had made few statements regarding slavery. Troubled by the

increasing influence of abolitionism and the rise of sectional conflict, Calhoun would devote the remainder of his life to defending the South and attempting to avoid conflict. Retiring from the Senate in 1843, he unsuccessfully pursued the presidency for the last time. In 1844, Calhoun was appointed as secretary of state.

Returning to the Senate in 1845, Calhoun served as a thoughtful critic of the war with Mexico and suggested the conflict would encourage disharmony between the North and South. In 1844, Calhoun had helped contain a truly revolutionary “Bluffton Movement” composed of his fellow South Carolinians. Many leading South Carolina politicians threatened drastic responses to a troublesome new tariff and the questionable status of Texas. Calhoun’s success at moderating the conflict demonstrated both his restraint in a crisis situation and his lack of control over the politicians who supported him.

Calhoun’s mature political ideas focused upon a defense of states’ rights and limited central government, and the vindication of the institution of slavery. His conception of republicanism highlighted the dangers of majoritarianism in federal politics, and the virtues of localism and a decentralized agrarian society. His concept of the “concurrent majority” was Calhoun’s chief proposed safeguard against majority tyranny, though it is usually pointed out that the minorities that interested him were landed elites. These ideas were outlined in the *Disquisitions on Government* and the *Discourse on the Constitution and Government of the United States*, both published shortly after Calhoun’s death, in 1850.

Calhoun’s persistent concern about the unequal treatment of the South would, he feared, lead to increased regional tensions and to civil war. His last years were spent attempting to unify the South and avoid strife. On March 31, 1850, Calhoun died in Washington, D.C. In death, Calhoun became a source of inspiration for the Confederate government, its leaders, and the South. Calhoun’s understanding of restraint within political order, albeit imperfect, remains one of the most important characteristics of his political thought and his achievement as a statesman. In Calhoun’s interpretation, the interposing and amending power of the states implicit in the Constitution could only augment authentic popular rule by allowing for

a greater diffusion of authority. Calhoun's purpose was the preservation of the original balance of authority and the fortification of the American political system against the obstacles it faced.

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See also [American Political Thought](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Camus, Albert

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Camus, Albert

Albert Camus (1913–60) was born in Algeria and grew up in a poverty-stricken environment where a lack of material possessions was more than compensated for by the natural and free pleasures of the Mediterranean seascape. His early collection of lyrical essays, *Noces* (1939), thus celebrates how a union with the natural world can offset the devastating consequences of social hardship. But if there was little sense of personal injustice on Camus's part caused by the nature of his formative years, his own particular circumstances would give him empathy toward the plight of others, igniting a concern for justice on behalf of those who were politically disfranchised and socially impoverished. The youthful Camus dabbled in organized politics, joining the French Communist Party in 1935, only to leave shortly afterward following a volte-face in the Party's attitude toward anticolonialism, which Camus saw to be a betrayal of the Arab cause in Algeria. He went on to find work at the local anticolonialist newspapers *Alger républicain* and *Le Soir républicain*, and it is here that he first engaged in crusading journalism, writing articles and supporting causes in the manner of a self-styled revolutionary.

In the wartime period, Camus found himself in France where, writing for the clandestine *Combat*, his celebrated editorials provided a rallying cry to defend moral values in the face of Nazi nihilism. It was also during these years of austerity that Camus published *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* (1942), *L'Étranger* (1942) and the play *Caligula* (1945), followed by *La Peste* (1947) and *Les Justes* (1949), a drama centered on the complex interplay

between morality and the pursuit of revolutionary justice in what remains a work as relevant today as when the play was originally performed half a century ago. The culmination of Camus's postwar moral reasoning, *L'Homme révolté*, was published in 1951, provoking a public polemical exchange with his one-time friend Jean-Paul Sartre in the pages of *Les Temps modernes*. At the same time, events in his Algerian homeland became an increasing cause for concern for Camus throughout the 1950s, with the Algerian civil war leaving a psychological scar from which it proved impossible for him to recover. Yet these difficult years, politically, also spawned some notable literary successes: *La Chute* was published to critical acclaim in 1956, while in the following year—when Camus was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature—he produced a collection of short stories, *L'Exil et le royaume*. And at the time of his premature death in a car accident in January 1960, Camus was working on an important new work, *Le premier Homme*, which the author himself saw to be his *magnum opus*. Published posthumously in 1994, this regrettably unfinished autobiographical novel has since provided the impetus for a renewal of interest in Camus's life and work.

Apart from his brief flirtation with the French Communist Party as outlined above, Camus was generally suspicious of using political doctrines as standards for action. A humanitarian pragmatist by nature, Camus's political instinct was that of a social reformer, striving to change the status quo on behalf of those who lacked the voice to speak out for themselves. Instinctively left wing, his lifelong preoccupation with justice was grounded in a conviction to defend civil rights and principles of liberalism in the face of tyranny and oppressive practices. While readily acknowledging the imperfections of the idea, Camus saw liberal democracy to be the best means by which to reconcile social justice and individual freedom. As absolute forms of morality, justice and freedom are contradictory and irreconcilable concepts; human prosperity, Camus insisted, is best served by a plurality of relative moral values. Failing to maintain ethical integrity in a given revolutionary campaign is to sacrifice morality on the altar of political ideology. In other words, revolutionary justice requires that the means remain consonant with the end; in Camus's political vision, the end cannot be allowed to justify the means. At the dawn of the twenty-first century, this mind-set remains acutely apposite.

Mark Orme

See also [Alienation](#); [Empire and Political Thought](#); [French Political Thought](#); [National Socialism](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Revolution](#); [Sartre, Jean-Paul](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Capitalism

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Capitalism

Capitalism is currently the world's predominant economic system and, in the most basic terms, can be defined as the process of investing money in the expectation of making a profit. There is, however, no single model of capitalism, and a number of forms presently exist or have historically existed. This diversity creates some difficulties when it comes to defining the limits of capitalism, although there are common features. Of particular note are the use of the market as a mechanism, which may be free or regulated, and the existence of private property rights of some kind. Both market regulation and property rights can be affected by political considerations in different countries.

Capitalism has particularly been associated with liberalism, especially the variants advocating little or no regulation of markets. Other ideologies, including some versions of socialism, also engage with capitalism and capitalist principles, albeit often within a different intellectual framework. The principle of economic freedom is generally linked to capitalism and some commentators, most notably Milton Friedman, have argued the case for considering capitalism as a prerequisite of political and personal freedom. Conversely, other political ideologies, such as Marxism and libertarian socialism, are heavily critical of capitalism and consider it to lead to exploitation, reduction of freedom for the majority, and inequitable outcomes.

History of Capitalism

The earliest incarnation of capitalism that is readily recognizable by modern standards is mercantilism. Historical attention around mercantilism has gravitated toward the experience of British, Dutch, Spanish, and Portuguese activities, as these were the dominant seafaring powers between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. The definition of mercantilism as a capitalist system is open to some debate; despite its leading to a complex system of trade for profit, it did not necessitate a system of production along capitalist lines. It was, however, distinct in many aspects from the feudalist economic system.

Mercantilism operated on the basis of longdistance trading; goods were exported from the home country to overseas markets with other goods then being imported back to the home market for sale. It provided a means for the holders of capital to invest their assets, at risk, for the opportunity of a profit. Mercantilist practices were generally rather intricately tied to national interests and a key concern was ensuring a balance-of-payments surplus (i.e., exports should be of a greater value overall than imports). The system reached its zenith in the eighteenth century at which time states were engaged in the practice of granting monopoly charters to companies, such as the British East India Company, removing the possible negative effect of domestically originating competition on profits in the process. In both this monopolistic practice and the state's economic intervention, mercantilism prefigured aspects of some modern capitalist forms.

Mercantilism in Britain led directly to the development of industrial capitalism during the nineteenth century as it helped to develop markets and increase consumption. Moreover, the preceding trading endeavors ensured an accumulation of capital seeking new investment opportunities that could be met by an increase in industrial production. New theories of political economy emerged, especially witnessed in the work of David Hume, Adam Smith, and David Ricardo, challenging the presumptions of mercantilism and favoring instead a view of economic progress founded upon free markets. Smith's thought in particular has had an enduring influence and his concepts of division of labor, the invisible hand of the market (self-regulation), and the benefits of competition and self-interest have been built

upon and refined by subsequent economists. Britain's early industrialization made it the workshop of the world, and it required both raw materials from abroad to fuel its production and overseas markets in which to sell its products. By the middle of the nineteenth century, Britain had embraced the free trade arguments of the so-called Manchester School of economics and ended almost all of its protective tariffs on imports. Other states began to industrialize, often with the aid of protectionist barriers, ultimately ending Britain's hegemony in the international economy and developing a global system of capitalist production assisted by imperial expansion. Imperialism was aided by the emergence of finance capitalism whereby capitalists sought returns from overseas investments rather than putting their money into domestic production. The creation of global flows of capital laid the groundwork for the globalized economy of the second half of the twentieth century.

Capitalism was not, however, a completely successful system. Rather, it was subject to periodic downturns in the trade cycle that led to unemployment as firms tried to constrain costs so as to improve declining profits or constrain losses. In an age before the advent of the welfare state, this practice often had disastrous consequences for members of the working class. The initial response to this plight came in the form of political ideas such as New Liberalism (or social liberalism) that sought to limit the negative excesses of capitalism upon the poor through a residual welfare state acting as a safety net. After the Great Depression, the largest and most significant crisis of capitalism, an entirely new macroeconomic model emerged based on the thought of John Maynard Keynes. Keynesian economics attempts to manage capitalism and stabilize the economic cycle, and it is often thought of as being hand-in-hand with a larger and more actively redistributive welfare state. The two need not be implemented together, however, although they can be complementary to one another.

Keynesian thought was the dominant force in mainstream economics between the end of World War II and the late 1970s. It was challenged by the stagflation (high unemployment coupled with high inflation) crisis of the 1970s and neoliberalism rose to the ascendancy. Neoliberals, following the lead of Friedman and Friedrich Hayek among others, favor free markets and laissez-faire capitalism on the basis that it promotes efficiency,

consumer choice, and lower prices. Such ideas gained currency in many Western governments during the 1980s, often leading to a rolling back of the welfare state and the privatization of nationalized industries to promote competition. It is worth noting, however, that the concept of free markets is not quite as its name implies, and most states have placed a great number of regulations upon economic activity for a variety of reasons, including the goal of preventing monopolies forming that could harm economic freedom and choice. The economic crisis that began in 2008 (often known as the Great Recession) led to a questioning of many of the suppositions of neoliberalism as well as a largely unheralded return of some Keynesian ideas.

The present stage of capitalism is often referred to as one of globalization in the international economy owing to the rise of multinational companies and more integrated global trade. Globalization is a much-debated term, however, although it is popularly used, and is an idea that is variously supported and opposed by different groups. Significantly, globalization suggests coherence to the evolution of capitalism and can be seen as part of a lineage that includes mercantilism, imperialism, and financial capitalism.

Political Ideology and Theories of Capitalism

Given its complexity and association with political ideas, it is unsurprising that a number of theories of capitalism have been developed. Of these, Marxism is perhaps the best known as a result of the ostensible adoption of its tenets in the Soviet Union. Marxism does not have a monopoly on anticapitalist thought, however, and there are conversely a number of theories that support capitalism as an economic system.

Marxism

Karl Marx developed his ideas on what he generally referred to as the “capitalist mode of production” over a great number of writings, many of which involved collaboration with Friedrich Engels. Marx saw history as a series of changes to the mode of production, which was defined by the relation of society and individuals to productive property. Capitalism is a

later stage in this history and distinguished itself from previous modes of production by having two large classes in clear and direct antagonism with one another, the bourgeoisie (owners of the means of production) and the workers. Capitalism allows the bourgeoisie to extract surplus value from workers via the sale of goods (i.e., workers are paid below the value of their labor input). This state of relations makes the workers dependent on continuing to sell their labor, as they are unable to afford independence and self-sustenance. Marx argued that this was unsustainable and felt that capitalism would eventually lead to the working classes attaining class consciousness and facilitating the revolutionary overthrow of the system to be replaced by a socialist mode of production.

Several thinkers have revised aspects of Marx's theory, often with a view to updating it in relation to subsequent developments in capitalism or to apply the theory to certain countries. For the most part, these revisions have left Marx's economic analysis relatively unchanged or else have departed from being identifiably Marxist. The most noted revisionist interpretations are Marxist-Leninism and Maoism, the latter of which still retains influence in the People's Republic of China despite that country's having embraced many aspects of market economics and state capitalism.

Joseph Schumpeter, a political conservative, agreed with Marx's view of capitalism's inevitable collapse and replacement by socialism, but did not think this would come about through revolution. Instead, he used the idea of creative destruction to explain capitalism's ever-changing nature while contending that the system would eventually become burdened with regulation and corporatism alongside an intellectual distaste for its negative effect on human well-being.

Liberalism

There is no single theory of capitalism associated with liberalism, as befits an ideology that is so diverse. Classical liberalism was associated with the classical economics of Smith, Hume, and Ricardo and their emphasis on laissez-faire and defense of private property. Similarly, contemporary mainstream liberalism is generally associated with neoclassical economics. One can also make a crude distinction between right liberalism (e.g.,

neoliberalism) and left liberalism (e.g., social liberalism) and the different economic theories underpinning them.

Neoliberals have tended to accentuate the thought of the Austrian and Chicago schools in particular. These schools argue that market capitalism is the only reasonable way to run an efficient economy and that economic planning is injurious to personal and political freedom. Although they favor deregulated labor markets, neoliberals tend to emphasize the need for regulation to ensure monopolistic practices do not emerge. Furthermore, neoliberalism holds self-interest and individualism to be the key motivators of economic progress and does not see this as opposed to universal improvement. Accordingly, neoliberals aim for minimal government intervention in the economy beyond the aforementioned regulation, and monetarism has tended to be their preferred macroeconomic policy.

Social liberalism, by contrast, is generally associated with Keynesian economics. Keynes agreed with other liberals and libertarians insofar as he felt capitalism was essential to maintaining political freedom, but he also felt that the economic system required management to maintain equilibrium and avert crisis. Keynes's interventionist policies require an expanded role for the state, and social liberals have tended to couple this view with a corresponding vision of a welfare state.

Social Democracy

Social democratic theories of capitalism tend to experience some overlap with either Marxian theories or social liberal theories. Three trends in particular have been prominent since 1945, the most left-wing of which has been support for a mixed economy, often predicated on the Nordic model. Most capitalist systems have some elements that are run by the state on pragmatic grounds (e.g., postal services, railways, telecommunications), but some social democrats argue that state monopolies should be used wherever the benefits of economies of scale would outweigh the benefits of choice from competing providers. Many mixed economy proponents also support Keynesian economics.

The second trend is the so-called social market economy. This model was pioneered in postwar Germany and attempts to maintain the free market as far as possible on the basis that it is the most efficient model, while seeking to ameliorate some of the negative effects it can have. It is therefore associated with economic regulation and the provision of social security.

The third strand of social democratic economic thought is the most recent and has considerable overlap with the second. Third Way thinking draws on a tradition of ethical socialism and social liberalism to adopt a centrist approach. It is positive about capitalism and tends to support the adoption of market approaches in public services to promote greater choice. Its most prominent adherents have been Tony Blair, Kevin Rudd, and Anthony Giddens.

Other

Fascists tend to be critical of capitalism on nationalist grounds, instead favoring corporatism and some nationalization. Green politics is concerned with sustainability and contends that capitalism in its current form is not ecologically sustainable. Green supporters, reflecting the diversity of the movement, have prescribed a wide variety of policies ranging from socialist-inspired to market-based solutions. Cooperativism seeks to create an alternate worker or consumer ownership model within the capitalist system and distributes a firm's profits depending on the input of such owners. Cooperatives are compatible with other ideologies and are often seen as a form of socialism. Conservatism has, in modern times, mostly embraced neoliberalism although earlier conservatives had advocated greater economic management and policies approaching mercantilism.

Jason N. Brock

See also [Conservatism](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Equality and Egalitarianism](#); [Friedman, Milton](#); [Hayek, Friedrich](#); [Hume, David](#); [Ideology](#); [Justice](#); [Keynes, John Maynard](#); [Liberalism](#); [Libertarianism](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Neoconservatism](#); [Neoliberalism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Property, Theories of](#); [Schumpeter](#),

[Joseph](#); [Scottish Enlightenment](#); [Socialism](#); [Smith, Adam](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [Welfare State](#), [Theories of the](#)

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Carlyle, Thomas

Thomas Carlyle was born at Ecclefechan in Dumfriesshire, Scotland, in 1795 and died in the London suburb of Chelsea in 1881. Although Carlyle's social origins were humble—his father, originally a self-employed builder, farmed as a tenant on a modest scale—he received a good education, initially at a local high school and then at the University of Edinburgh. Having studied mathematics, philosophy, and classics in the arts program, Carlyle enrolled in the theology faculty in preparation for a career in the Church of Scotland. This career was his parents' preference but seems never to have appealed strongly to Carlyle; it became increasingly untenable as his suspicion of theological orthodoxy and clerical authority hardened. Having abandoned thoughts of the ministry by 1817 and after other false starts as a student of law and engineering, Carlyle embarked on a literary career, supporting himself in the meantime by private tutoring. Between 1820 and 1840, he rose from the ranks of anonymous writers of encyclopedia entries and reviews to a leading place on the national and international stage. His major political writings were published between 1830 to 1850, but reprints and collected editions extended their currency through to the end of the century. Thanks partly to these reprints, Carlyle's works attracted working-class readers as well as the upper- and middle-class audiences to whom they were originally addressed.

Carlyle never produced (or showed any interest in producing) a systematic philosophical treatise on politics. He was an author rather than a professional philosopher, reliant on the income from books and articles and

presenting his social and political ideas in many different forms. In the late 1820s and 1830s, Carlyle made a name for himself as a sympathetic critic and translator of recent German literature, but his essays on German romantic figures, and on Johann Wolfgang Goethe, were only part of an extensive range of writings on literary, topical, and historical themes. He went on to publish a quasi-autobiographical, pseudo-biographical novel, large-scale historical studies of the French Revolution and of Frederick the Great of Prussia, a heavily annotated edition of the letters and speeches of Oliver Cromwell, parables on a range of biographical and historical themes, and a number of highly charged polemical tracts.

Humanity's Mission and the Gospel of Labor

The historical cast of many of Carlyle's writings reflected his views on the correspondence between the institutions, practices, and conventions (forms) prevalent in particular times and places and timeless values embodied in various expressions of the spirit of religion. This spirit, necessarily tied in Carlyle's mind to humanity's imperative duty to bring productive order to a protean and often chaotic universe, was not the exclusive preserve of particular professions or creeds. The realization of humanity's mission depended ultimately on the moral authenticity of those who responded to what Carlyle called the gospel of labor. This idea played a central role in his political and social writings. The term *labor* embraced all forms of activity—artistic, economic, intellectual, literary, prophetic, social, and political—that contributed to humanity's mission and to modern Britain's critical role in it. Carlyle thought that the contemporary focus of this quest lay with industrialization and the diffusion of its fruits through colonization. His unqualified support for British imperialism, and the moral implications of his claims that slaves and former slaves in the United States and in the West Indies were unable to respond to the gospel of labor, offended liberal-minded contemporaries such as John Stuart Mill. Even when these ideas were censured, however, Carlyle's credibility remained largely intact.

Carlyle's views on race were expressed in intemperate language that became a hallmark of his later writings and the subject of ongoing critical comment. The *Latter-Day Pamphlets* (collected under this title in 1851, having debuted as a series of separate publications in 1850) were seen as

marking a watershed. Although Carlyle's earlier works were hardly exemplars of sweetness and light (and might not have been so popular if they were), his deployment of the agonized cadences of despairing prophecy became more marked as his celebrity grew. In *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, this voice conveyed stern exhortations to personal and social reformation, strident calls for action, and a renunciation of the culture of formalism and posturing that Carlyle associated with parliamentary government. Savage mockery of putative opponents, and condemnation of their propensity for willful self-deception, was interspersed with statements of seething despair that his calls would ever be heard.

In *Past and Present*, one of his most widely read works, Carlyle contrasted the spiritual calm of high medieval society with the superficially assured but radically unsettled self-consciousness of contemporary discourses of morality and politics. This state of mind was a symptom of fundamental dislocation, the sense of which compounded the impact of political and social conflict by undermining his contemporaries' spiritual confidence. Carlyle did not evoke medieval society out of a sense of nostalgia. Rather, the image of an integrated existence was meant to inspire his contemporaries to respond to challenges that emerged when the order that had satisfied medieval humanity was no longer viable. Carlyle believed that Martin Luther's rejection of papal authority was the first episode in an ongoing series of struggles between the impulses to reformation and counterreformation, revolution and restoration, godliness and enlightenment, and reform and reaction that had punctuated the history of modern Europe. These struggles were a consequence of attempts to forge an intellectual, moral, social, and political order that would capture the possibilities latent in an evolving sense of modernity.

Carlyle believed that the full range of these possibilities would only become apparent as humankind came to grips with them. The shape of the future was indeterminate because it depended on the energy and intelligence exhibited by those who responded to the gospel of labor. Their actions gave concrete expression to the universal obligation to recognize humanity's distinctive moral sensibility and to embed values that were commensurate with it in an integrated body of cultural, social, and political forms. Carlyle's conception of human order was emphatically hierarchical, but it

combined a strong sense of the intractability of intellectual inequality with a notion of moral egalitarianism. It meant that effective leadership rested on a widespread, though largely inchoate, appreciation that authentic elites gave practical shape to shared aspirations.

Although these aspirations were historically specific, they corresponded in some degree with what Carlyle took to be an irreducible human sensibility. His treatment of this idea was colored by his engagement with German romanticism and framed by his understanding of the religious dimensions of human experience. He argued that humans were both finite and infinite beings. Unavoidably rooted in the material world and subject to mechanical forces, as participants in the infinite they were necessarily engaged with the dynamic forces that were embodied in and expressed through, art, music, philosophy, and religion. Since the moral and spiritual basis of social and individual life was grounded in dynamic principles, human beings could not tolerate an existence that failed to recognize the infinite in man. While endorsing the role that mechanical forces played in transforming the productive capacities of Western European societies, Carlyle complained that the science of mechanics was increasingly treated as if it was capable of providing a complete basis for human life. The impact of this mode of thinking was apparent in the disordered condition of modern society and in the deep sense of disorientation that precipitated it.

The Condition of England Question

In *Chartism* (1839), Carlyle focused on manifestations of disorientation in the lives of members of the working class, framing them in terms of what he called the *condition of England question*. Although this question was an element in a European phenomenon, it was particularly important in Britain because the advanced state of industrialization meant that the risks and potentialities of modern culture were most apparent there. The experience of the working class was critical: this class bore the brunt of rapid industrial development and if goaded into insurrection, possessed the weight of numbers to destroy society. Carlyle treated Chartism as emblematic of a range of movements of popular protest and radical reform in contemporary Britain—the campaign for manhood suffrage, militant and conspiratorial trade unionism, machine breaking, rural unrest, and violent reactions to the

severe Poor Law regime introduced in 1834—which he attributed to the working class’s largely inarticulate sense that it was not being treated justly by the middle and upper classes.

In a number of respects, Carlyle’s attack on contemporary capitalism bore a strong family resemblance to earlier romantically framed critiques by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and Robert Southey and to more recent ones produced by the Young England faction in the Conservative Party. It also, however, incorporated perspectives on industrial society that gave it a distinctive cast. Carlyle thought industrialization was to be welcomed as providing the material and geopolitical basis for the next stage in humanity’s chaos-taming mission: that it might give rise to hardship was just another demonstration that suffering was an unavoidable feature of human life. At the same time, however, he argued that the undue preponderance of the mechanical spirit produced an intellectual and moral environment that turned these hardships into intolerable burdens. The enthusiastic adoption of the doctrine of *laissez-faire* was a particularly significant demonstration of this tendency.

Contemporary proponents of *laissez-faire* treated the free market as a model of utility-maximizing efficiency, and on this ground, sought to minimize the role of government in economy and society. Carlyle associated this position with a pervasive and morally insidious abnegation of social responsibility among the upper and middle classes generally, particularly employers of labor. In response to these perceived failings, he promoted the notion of “captains of industry,” a coinage that fused pioneering entrepreneurship with images of authoritative personal leadership and a strong sense of responsibility for the well-being of subordinates. Effective leadership was necessary to achieve what Carlyle, much inspired by the followers of Henri de Saint-Simon, termed the *organization of labor*. This objective, one that linked the working class’s need for employment and direction with humanity’s chaos-taming mission, stood in sharp contrast to the response to unemployment and pauperization reflected in the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834.

Carlyle thought that this piece of legislation epitomized his contemporaries’ attachment to mechanical principles and demonstrated the full tragedy of

their impotence in the face of the challenges facing modern societies. Instead of promoting an intelligent response to unemployment and chronic poverty, which recognized the ethical significance of labor, the impact of uneven demand and market volatility, and the responsibility of employers and governors, the Act relied upon a simple and inhuman mechanism—the notorious workhouse test of less eligibility. This device was well suited to gauging the desperation of applicants for public support but was completely incapable of playing a role in the organization of labor. Carlyle did not regard the internal economy of the workhouse system as any more plausible. Paupers either languished in “sweltering idleness” or were engaged fitfully and ineffectually on make-work tasks that they knew to be a mockery of the gospel of labor. The practical futility of this approach was matched by its moral bankruptcy. It dehumanized struggling members of the working classes and sustained a public ethos that implied that those who had been thrown out of work by the invisible hand of the market were merely a public “nuisance” to be “upbraided” and “abated.” This was not, Carlyle observed, an “amiable faith.”

Although sharply critical of the doctrine of laissez-faire and of the implications of unbridled competition that he identified with it, Carlyle did not promote state or cooperative ownership of productive resources or question the need for private property. He often upbraided the upper classes for the use to which they put their property but never questioned their right to own and control it, nor did he regard property holders’ responsibilities as correlatives of their rights. Rather, his approach evoked a conception of human dignity that had strong romantic resonances infused with a lingering Calvinistic sense that suffering was unavoidable. It was also, however, governed by the idea of humanity’s mission and of the role of the gospel of labor in it. When these considerations were brought to bear on the legitimacy of private property holdings, they focused attention on the way in which property was used. The key issue was the organization of labor, not distributive justice or the rights of the working class to the products of its labor. Seen from this perspective, the duties of the property-holding classes were structurally identical with those of the working class. They were both expressions of a pure ethic that Carlyle presented in the form of the gospel of labor. This ethic required all members of society to commit themselves wholeheartedly to their roles in the state, society, and economy,

and it placed a premium on the quality of the output that resulted from their labors. The ethos of competitive capitalism compromised these values. It reduced the working class to a life of mere drudgery, undermined a commitment to honest production, and encouraged employers to view their workers as beasts of burden. Carlyle claimed that contemporary society inverted just order and systematically favored falsehood over truth. Laborers were engaged in sham labor, employers seemed committed to the disorganization of labor, and putative elites declined to provide political or social leadership. In *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, Carlyle extended his campaign to expose the worship of falsehood in art, celebrity, popular literature, and religious movements, providing a savage condemnation of contemporary culture and shrill warnings of the moral, spiritual, and practical perils that awaited a society that was so willfully indifferent to the claims of veracity and the duties that flowed from it.

In his economic and cultural criticism, Carlyle argued that his contemporaries had failed to come to terms with modernity in ways that met the requirements of humanity's indelible moral sensibility. Coining a phrase that was adapted by Karl Marx, he anticipated a condition where human relationships were reduced to a mere cash nexus. This chilling prospect arose because the principles of true morality were threatened by ideas associated with a conception of political economy that reduced human relations to market terms. While the working class suffered directly by exposure to the mechanical disciplines of the market, its reaction to them also unsettled the middle and upper classes, eroding their sense of material and spiritual well-being and throwing the community into endless crises. These developments mirrored the political and normative disintegration that had presaged large-scale revolutionary change in mid seventeenth-century England and late eighteenth-century France. Carlyle urged his readers to be sensitive to the fragility of social order and to appreciate the risk posed to it by the neglect of fundamental truths about the human condition. He underwrote this warning with a series of vivid demonstrations that the conduct and attitudes of the French elite had signaled its inability and unwillingness to come to grips with the challenges facing French society in the eighteenth century.

Authority, Leadership, and the Modern State

Carlyle's views on the viability of inherited systems of authority in contemporary Britain were as radical and emphatic as those that emerged from his study of French history. He was dismissive of the claims of the Church of England, and except on a few occasions later in his life when he was swayed by personal admiration, did not mourn the waning influence of aristocracy in British social and political life. He was particularly scathing in his condemnation of the Irish upper classes, presenting Ireland in the 1840s as a dystopian example of what England might become. Aristocratic and clerical authority was foremost among the dead forms that had been exposed in all their pathetic redundancy during the English and French Revolutions. But while Carlyle looked for an alternative to traditional forms of clerical, social, and political authority, he was adamant that it did not lay in middle-class conceptions of parliamentary government or in more radical democratic expressions of them.

Middle-class aspirations were tainted by their association with laissez-faire and with the narrowly materialistic connotations of contemporary free trade discourses. In addition, however, Carlyle identified middle-class reform programs with the triumph of parliamentarianism, an approach toward government that privileged forensic oratory and a blind adherence to arcane procedures over a commitment to purposeful action springing from insight into the real needs of the community. By contrast, effective leadership was informed by a sense of the realities underlying human life and took account of the dynamic forces that connected it with the infinite. The machinations of parliamentary parties and the posturing of stump orators were incompatible with these requirements and with the unself-conscious commitment to rectitude that was integral to them. As a result, Carlyle rejected the claims of those who thought that salvation lay in the refinement of parliamentary machinery and was scathingly dismissive of the leadership claims of the votaries of parliamentary government. In these circumstances, Carlyle argued, the working classes' demand for political rights was an understandable reaction to the leadership vacuum in modern culture. His response to this development emphasized elite failure rather than working-class presumption. He insisted that effective elite leadership was a necessary requirement of a well-ordered political community and that moves to promote democracy were incompatible with this requirement. Strictly speaking, democracy was really a system of nongovernment that

ignored the deeply ingrained sense that the wise had a responsibility to rule and that the rest of the population expected to obey them.

Carlyle's conception of political leadership rested on the assumption that while all human beings had a sense of their attachment to the infinite, only those with special gifts of character, intellect, and imagination were able to articulate this sense and give practical effect to it. These qualities distinguished heroic figures from ordinary mortals and provided the basis for hero worship. Heroic leadership called for insight, for moral and practical intelligence—the source of a sense of reality that is effective because it corresponds with significant truths—and for strength of character to overcome challenges that would necessarily arise in giving practical effect to these insights. Although heroic qualities might be displayed on the battlefield, Carlyle regarded military leadership as an occasional subset of political heroism not as a defining form of it. Nor did he see hero worship in terms of blind admiration or slavish obedience. Rather, it sprang from ordinary people's (generally inarticulate and often unconscious) insight into the character and mind of the hero and their appreciation that his (Carlyle's heroes are always male) utterances, and more particularly his actions, were directed toward the realization of objectives which they shared with him.

This idea of leadership was framed by an understanding of moral and political culture that related directly to Carlyle's critique of the science of mechanics. At the same time, however, his claims about the need to identify forms that were appropriate to a given culture meant that considerations of leadership needed to engage with institutional questions. Much of what Carlyle wrote on this theme was critical and largely negative and he generally declined to be drawn into advancing detailed statements on questions of policy or political practice. In *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, however, he not only presented a highly charged restatement of his oft-stated views on the failings of parliamentary government but also argued for an alternative to it. Carlyle's "New Downing Street" was presided over by a prime minister and cabinet that sat in parliament but were not answerable to it. These officials owed their appointment to the Crown and used parliament as a sounding board for policy that was to reflect their insight and expertise and to be free from the insidious influence of parliamentary inanities and stump oratory. As part of this process of genuine reform, Carlyle looked to

the chief governor of the New Downing Street to cleanse the Augean stable of British government, ridding it of its reliance on protocoling establishments and rescuing it from the labyrinth of red tape into which it had stumbled.

These prescriptions were framed by a conception of the state that made it the focal point of modern society: it was a “*luminous vitality* permeating with its light all provinces of our affairs” (Carlyle 1893, *Latter-Day Pamphlets, Works*, 84; emphasis added) and drawing on the heroic capacities found throughout contemporary society. This image endowed government with light and warmth and attributed these qualities to the interaction of an active and engaged population with leaders who responded to its needs and utilized its commitment and energy. On this account, heroic leadership complimented the agency of the community rather than displacing it. It might thus be seen as giving effect to aspirations that had been voiced by the German Romantic writers whom Carlyle had praised in his early writings. As with Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis, this vision of light, warmth, and energy was juxtaposed to counter images of cold, dead machinery that they associated with absolutism and Carlyle with contemporary reformers’ exclusive commitment to the science of mechanics.

Impact

Carlyle’s earliest essay in social and political thought (“Signs of the Times”) appeared in 1829 and the last (“Shooting Niagara: And After?”) in 1867. This period opened with the constitutional crisis precipitated by moves to admit Roman Catholics to active citizenship and closed with the popular agitation and political maneuvering that presaged a significant expansion of the male electorate by the parliamentary reform act of 1868. Each of these developments played a role in the works that spanned Carlyle’s career as a political writer, but typically he did not think that their true significance lay in their impact on the confessional or class composition of the British House of Commons. Rather, he thought that they were symptomatic of his contemporaries’ ongoing failure to come to grips with the challenges posed by modernity.

The interest generated by Carlyle's works in his lifetime and for decades after his death rested in part on a fascination with the earnest and evenhandedly radical personality that generations of readers thought lay behind them. He was seen as genuinely nonpartisan in relation to contemporary politics and not the spokesperson of any class or creed, an exemplar of authenticity who appealed to those promoting a wide range of agendas of moral, social, and political reform. These reactions to Carlyle persisted throughout his career and featured in obituary notices that flooded the press. If consideration is given to contemporary responses to Carlyle's substantive ideas, however, the position is more complex. In the 1830s and 1840s, his work attracted the attention of some conservative Anglicans and romantically inclined radicals like Mill who were alarmed at the spiritual malaise they discerned in modern society. Carlyle's increasingly emphatic rejection of traditional institutions, his open criticism of the upper classes, and his elevation of Cromwell as a hero, aroused suspicion among his conservative admirers. At the same time, however, it became apparent that he had no time for liberal radicalism of the kind associated with John Stuart Mill. This difference was partly a matter of personal temperament, but it also reflected substantive differences of outlook. Carlyle never accepted the modified utilitarianism that Mill espoused, he did not think that happiness was an appropriate or realistic goal for humankind, and he was dismissive of what he saw as Mill's roseate, weak-kneed progressivism. For Carlyle, hierarchy and subordination were permanent requirements of viable human order, not temporary features of an educational regime.

Carlyle's ideas were enthusiastically endorsed by John Ruskin. Both men abhorred liberalism and democratic politics and were hostile to the style of political economy that they identified with Mill. Ruskin's approach rested on a form of moral functionalism that was similar to that espoused by Carlyle in that it gave moral priority to labor. Ruskin, however, imbued the gospel of labor with aesthetic values that were not a feature of Carlyle's position but were connected to it through a shared commitment to an ideal of true labor. In this way, Carlyle's ideas fed into strands of late nineteenth-century socialism that stressed the material and moral dangers that competitive capitalism posed for the working class and for the ethos of society. As in other cases, the perception of Carlyle's radical sincerity was a significant aspect of his appeal, one that reflected the commitment to

fundamental social and political transformation found in the widely read socialist tracts of figures such as William Morris and Robert Blatchford.

John Morrow

See also [Authority](#); [Chartism](#); [Conservatism](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Empire and Political Thought](#); [Equality and Egalitarianism](#); [Liberalism](#); [Malthus, Thomas Robert](#); [Mill, John Stuart](#); [Morris, William](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Planning](#); [Race and Racism](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Romanticism](#); [Ruskin, John](#); [Saint-Simon, Henri de](#); [Socialism](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Totalitarianism](#); [Utilitarianism](#); [Utopianism](#)

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Castoriadis, Cornelius

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Castoriadis, Cornelius

Cornelius Castoriadis (1922–97) was a Greek-French philosopher and psychoanalyst whose writings contributed crucially to the renewal of radical thought as the influence of Marxism waned from the 1960s onward. His range of interests and contributions was extraordinarily encompassing: he was equally comfortable writing about the philosophy and history of science, ontological questions, ancient Greek thought, modern phenomenology, structuralist anthropology and linguistics, the psychoanalytic tradition from Sigmund Freud to Jacques Lacan, and almost every aspect of political philosophy. His major work is *The Imaginary Institution of Society* ([1975] 2005), and many of his most important essays appear in a series of volumes translated and edited by David Ames Curtis.

Castoriadis was born of Greek parents in Constantinople, but his family moved to Athens while he was an infant. Castoriadis joined the Greek Communist Youth in the late 1930s. During the Nazi occupation of Greece, he was a student and a participant in clandestine Trotskyist cells. With the liberation of Greece, political instability led Castoriadis to move to Paris. There, his engagement with Trotskyists quickly led to disenchantment, and along with Claude Lefort, he created the group and journal *Socialisme ou Barbarie* in 1948. Castoriadis was the undisputed leader of the group and the most prolific contributor to the journal. For years, he worked days as an economist for the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development while evenings he wrote and participated in militant circles. His early articles attacked the Soviet Union for betraying the Marxian

legacy by developing into a highly organized and oppressive form of what he called bureaucratic capitalism. In opposition, Castoriadis identified the true content of socialism with the struggle of people to gain control over their activities. This redefinition of socialism as a fight for *autogestion* (self-management) would remain a key theme in Castoriadis's work, and it became influential among French leftists during the 1960s and 1970s. By the early 1960s, Castoriadis concluded that Marx's flawed economic theory, deterministic philosophy of history, and productivist orientation bore some of the blame for the twentieth century's derailed socialist experiment. Marxism, he concluded, now stood in the way of radical thought. The *Socialisme ou Barbarie* group broke up in the mid-1960s over the implications of this provocative conclusion. Castoriadis's prominence grew in the student uprising of 1968 when leading figures acknowledged his influence; and as many French leftists turned away from communism and Marxism in the 1970s, his thought found a wide audience. He became a practicing psychoanalyst, and in 1980, he was elected to the prestigious École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, where he taught until his death.

Crucial to Castoriadis's attempt to reinvigorate radical thought was a vision of history that emphasized contingency, creativity, and the emergence of novel forms of social life. Inventiveness and creativity are key features of the human condition. Redefining revolutionary politics as the project of autonomy, Castoriadis affirmed a rigorous commitment to participation and collective deliberation. Taking the ancient democratic polis as an ideal, he championed direct democracy against all forms of representative government and bureaucratic management. Reminding his readers that the Greek root of autonomy is *auto nomos*, to give oneself a law, Castoriadis insisted that the indeterminate nature of history did not consign people to chaos but rather opened the possibility for the exercise of their own freedom.

One of Castoriadis's most distinctive contributions to social thought was his idea of the social imaginary. The social-historical world, he argued, is formed by the social imaginary, the creative power by which a society draws on reservoirs of significations and representations to institute itself as a specific mode of human coexistence. True to his emphasis on historical

contingency, he stressed that no model of causality or dialectical process can exhaustively explain the imaginative acts by which individuals and collectivities create meanings and materialize these meanings in institutions. Human existence is always self-creation, a ceaseless process of self-transforming human activity animated by the imagination, but self-creation has been typically concealed, covered over, assigned to a transcendent source, as in religion, or a deterministic process, as in Marxism. The project of autonomy, in Castoriadis's formulation, demands that human beings recognize themselves as the source of their own creation and adopt a freeing and interrogative attitude toward their individual lives and shared institutions.

Warren Breckman

See also [Autonomy](#); [Communism](#), [Varieties of](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [French Political Thought](#); [Lefort, Claude](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Psychoanalysis and Political Thought](#); [Stalin and Stalinism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Castro, Fidel

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Castro, Fidel

Fidel Castro Ruz (b. 1926), former president of Cuba, is the son of an immigrant from Galicia, Spain, who, after having been educated at the De Lasalle College at Santiago de Cuba, later by Jesuits at the Colegio Dolores in the same city and at the Colegio de Belén in Havana, graduated from the University of Havana as a lawyer and went on to become the charismatic architect of a revolution that overthrew the dictatorial regime of Fulgencio Batista and established a socialist state. As president of Cuba, Fidel held on to power until February 2008, when the presidential reins were handed to his brother, Raúl Castro.

While a student at school and university, Castro excelled at sports but was also involved in political activism, often in support of the Orthodox Party led by Eduardo Chibás. The situation was volatile. Murders occurred, and student gangs played a prominent part. In 1947, Castro participated in a failed expedition to overthrow the Dominican Republic dictator, Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molina. Cuba at that time was very much a U.S. playground and well known for involvement with Mafia interests. Castro soon endeavored to change the status quo represented by the corrupt and repressive regime of dictator Batista, who had assumed control of the government following a military coup in 1952. Together with others, including his brother Raúl, Castro staged an abortive attack on the Moncada Barracks in Santiago de Cuba with a view to paving the way for a revolution. The date was July 26th, 1953, which was to become a momentous one; Castro would insist on its being identified as the start of

the Cuban revolution. The attack floundered, and Castro, together with many others, was rounded up and arrested. Although some of his comrades were executed, Castro sentenced to fifteen years. While in prison, Castro reconstructed the defense he had presented at trial, and it was published as a tract titled “History Will Absolve Me,” which was widely circulated throughout Cuba. He read voraciously and helped set up a prison school.

Castro was released in 1955 as a result of an amnesty and eventually went to Mexico, where he met the Argentinean doctor turned revolutionary, Ernesto “Che” Guevara. A number of potential revolutionaries from Cuba and elsewhere joined Castro’s clandestine movement—the 26th July Movement—and a group of about eighty-two landed in Cuba on December 2, 1956. They were dispersed by the enemy, and afterward, only eleven remained. They retreated to the Sierra Maestre, where more locals joined their ranks. Following the eventual capture of several localities, Castro and his followers marched on Havana on January 8, 1959. By then, Batista had been forced into exile. Castro was first appointed Commander of the Armed Forces and later prime minister. Agrarian reform was implemented, characterized by the breaking up of large landholdings and their redistribution among peasants, some of whom were organized into cooperatives.

In 1960, Castro signed a trade agreement with the Soviet Union and nationalized several U.S. oil refineries in Cuba, after which the United States instituted a series of sanctions. In January 1961 the United States broke diplomatic relations with Cuba and, through the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, planned an invasion of Cuba, which would eventuate in the disastrous Bay of Pigs operation in April of that year. Although Castro had a stormy relationship with the Catholic Church, relations with the Vatican had thawed significantly toward the end of the 1990s when Pope John Paul II visited the country. Despite all the economic difficulties, Cuba under Castro made tremendous strides forward in education, medicine, science, sport, international exchange relations, and sustainable development.

Cuba today places its educational and medical facilities at the service of not only its own people and celebrities, but also the common people of Africa,

Asia, and many other parts of the world. As part of its revolutionary commitment to international cooperation, Cuba makes the products of these institutions (teachers, health workers, doctors) available for export against token fees, depending on the receiving country's ability to pay. There has emerged a series of bilateral, trilateral, or multilateral agreements generated by these forms of collaboration with other countries, within the context of South-to-South cooperation in which developing countries exchange and share resources, technology, and knowledge to support sustainable development.

Like Nicaragua later, Cuba was forced to contend with overwhelming obstacles in its efforts to serve as a revolutionary model to other countries within the U.S. intercontinental sphere of influence in the Americas. Despite sordid moments, the Cuban revolution hoped to evolve into an alternative political economic structure in contestation to the Capitalist West, the latter denounced for the exploitative nature of the economic and social relations it promotes.

There have been notable achievements in the areas of preventive health, sports, international exchanges, sustainable development, and science. As with all societies, there are perennial issues of concern, such as those of control over departure and return of Cuban nationals, the often expressed feelings, by visitors, of a sense of repression, the reemergence of prostitution, the adoption of a different price structure for foreigners and locals, and the historical amnesia among present-day younger Cuban citizens with respect to knowledge of life in Cuba prior to the revolution. There is also the persistent major problem of the U.S. blockade, denounced by several dignitaries.

Cuban health and educational systems are the envy of many nations, and the University of Havana medical school is considered among the best in the world.

According to the 2006 World Wildlife Federation Living Planet report, Cuba is the only country in the world with sustainable development. As noted by John Bachtell (2009), it combines high human development standards (high literacy and health indexes) with a low ecological footprint; this footprint includes the rate of electricity consumed and carbon dioxide

emitted per capita. In making use of old cars and other products that are made to function thanks to some superb mechanics and technicians, Castro's Cuba has militated against the prevalent consumer culture ideology of obsolescence with its devastating planetary effects.

Great poverty exists. Prostitution, for example, that very same social predicament of exploited poor women and adolescent girls initially tackled head on by the revolutionary government through educational and rehabilitation measures such as schools for prostitutes, is on the rise once again, especially in tourist areas (similar to other countries), despite its illegality. Cuba operates a strict policy of control over departures and arrivals of citizens from abroad. It is often argued that this policy needs to be revised, given that the situation has dramatically changed since the early days of the revolution when Cuba lost a huge percentage of its brainpower, in terms of doctors and other professionals, to the United States. If anything, the small nation now proactively exports such power. There is also an overproduction of qualified people without reciprocal economic investments to integrate them. It has been argued that one should not blame this problem solely on the infamous blockade, which in the view of many, has no justification today (if ever), now that the former Soviet Union's threat to the United States no longer exists.

Castro's political opinions commenced with an anti-imperialist outlook that developed toward socialism after his role in the Dominican uprising of 1947. Between 1948 and 1950, his ideas developed towards Marxism, though his principal goal remained Cuban national independence, and an astute balance between nationalism and Marxist internationalism would characterize most of his mature policies. His famous courtroom speech "History Will Absolve Me" (16 October 1953) was radical rather than socialist, its chief pleas being for land reform and a sharing of industrial and agricultural profits. Agrarian reform indeed became one of Castro's first measures after the 1959 revolution. Cuba was pronounced a socialist country in 1961, and for the next forty years, despite some disagreements with the USSR, the Soviet model would dominate Castro's theory and his practical political measures. All private enterprises were finally banned in 1968, though in the early 1990s and again more recently free market initiatives have begun anew. Abroad, Castro focused support on national

liberation movements of various kinds in Latin and South America and Africa in particular.

Peter Mayo

See also [Communism, Varieties of](#); [Empire and Political Thought](#); [Latin American Political Thought](#); [Marx, Karl](#)

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Chartism

Chartism

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Chartism

Chartism can plausibly be characterized as Britain's first civil rights movement. It took its name from *The People's Charter* (May 1838), a proposal for political reform presented as a draft parliamentary bill, prepared by William Lovett for the London Working Men's Association. It contained nothing new of any substance, save for a frontispiece of a polling station and voting machine. However, it quickly achieved prominence as the defining statement for democratic reform at a time of burgeoning social and political unrest and by early 1839 had given its name to the mass movement that dominated British domestic politics until 1848. Designed to complete the process of reform begun by the Magna Carta (1215), the Charter's six key demands had been a commonplace of radical discourse since the 1770s: universal male suffrage, a salary for every member of Parliament (MP), no property qualification for MPs, election by secret ballot, equal sizing of constituencies, and annual parliaments. The latter signaled an intention to make parliamentary democracy as participative as possible.

As a political movement, Chartism was most potent during three downturns in the trade cycle, 1838 to 1840, 1842, and 1848. In 1838 to 1839, Chartism mobilized significant cross-class support and middle-class delegates were notable within its National Convention, elected in February 1839. However, the readiness of many delegates to countenance using force, if peaceable agitation failed, meant Chartism swiftly hemorrhaged polite supporters: by the summer it had assumed the character for which it is generally

remembered (and was celebrated by the young Karl Marx), that of a mass movement of industrial workers. Under the leadership of the National Charter Association (NCA—formed 1840), and galvanized by renewed economic depression, 3.3 million people signed Chartism's 1842 petition. This petition argued passionately not only for the Charter alone, but also for reduced working hours, Poor Law reform, the independence of Ireland under the British crown, the disestablishment of the Church of England, and economies in the cost of the monarchy and military. The petition text also complained of "a host of other evils, too numerous to mention, all arising from class legislation." As the gulf separating Chartism from middle-class opinion widened, the Charter was taken up with unprecedented vigor by organized trades, leading to an almost general strike in northern England in the late summer of 1842.

Chartism never regained that level of potency, though in 1848 for the first time it mobilized mass support in London, to the considerable alarm of a government mindful of revolution abroad. Resolute policing combined with misjudgments by the Chartist leadership (inspired by events in Paris, the submission of another mass petition was brought forward before the movement nationally was fully prepared) to send Chartism into a slow spiral of decline. Its active membership dwindling, the NCA was beset by infighting. By 1851, it was little more than a pressure group, now advocating an extensive social democratic program as well as the Charter. Largely unnoticed, the last Chartist National Convention was held in 1858. Yet the 1850s also saw a proliferation of Chartists serving on local government bodies (the first had been elected as early as 1841).

Though it has consistently been viewed as a benchmark agitation in British political history, opinions about Chartism have varied widely. During the second half of the nineteenth century, frustration at its failure was largely channeled into criticism of its leaders, especially the charismatic Feargus O'Connor who dominated the movement after 1839. By 1918, opinion had hardened, excoriating the rapid marginalization of Lovett, apparently at O'Connor's hands. Yet Lovett lacked the vital skills for platform agitation (that O'Connor had in abundance). Furthermore, the contrast between the two was largely the historiographical contrivance of Fabian authors, overlooking the extent to which all working-class Chartists, Lovett

included, subscribed to the slogan “peacefully if we may, forcibly if we must,” in 1838 to 1839. Similarly contrived was the interpretation of Chartism as a fully class-conscious proletarian movement. This interpretation obscured the renewed vitality it gave to the long-established radical assault on aristocratic corruption and was the target of Gareth Stedman Jones’s influential 1983 essay “Rethinking Chartism.” It also failed to comprehend or explain the extent to which those who had called themselves Chartists subsequently reached an accommodation with liberalism. Since the 1980s, the political complexity of Chartism has been more generally acknowledged, the endurance of Chartist ideals appreciated, and O’Connor’s reputation largely rehabilitated. The rich diversity of its cultural manifestations (especially poetry and its periodical press) is also increasingly recognized.

Malcolm Chase

See also [Democratic Theory](#), [Fabianism](#); [Liberalism](#); [Marx, Karl](#)

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Josef Gregory Mahoney Josef Gregory Mahoney

Chinese Cultural Revolution

Chinese cultural revolution

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Chinese Cultural Revolution

Some view history in terms of specific events, however misunderstood; some view it as a progressive evolution, however painful; and still others see it as one ever-expanding catastrophe. China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (CR) is susceptible to all three views. Commonly described as being in its first and last instance a scheme aimed at restoring and sustaining Mao Zedong's preeminence as China's paramount leader following his disastrous Great Leap Forward policies (1958–61), its targets were feudal, capitalist, and revisionist counterrevolutionary elements in the party and state apparatuses as well as society at large. Many then and now view the CR as the damning conclusion of Maoism and a complete unmasking of a self-aggrandizing, suppressive, and exploitative tyranny at the heart of Mao Zedong Thought, if not the Communist Party of China (CPC) as a whole, while others view it positively, and even nostalgically.

Historical Context

Initiated with Mao's blessing in 1966 and propelled in a quasi-religious fervor by paramilitary units composed primarily of youths known as the Red Guards, most record the CR as culminating with Mao's death in 1976. Others believe CR-related policies were still operative in many senses as Mao's immediate successor, Hua Guofeng, attempted to form a new cult of personality while leading the nation anew in studying Mao Zedong Thought—efforts that had failed largely by 1978, and certainly by 1980, when Hua

was demoted. Nevertheless, Hua is given credit for overthrowing the Gang of Four—a pro-CR leadership faction led by Mao’s powerful but estranged wife, Jiang Qing—shortly after Mao’s death and for marginalizing others deemed extremist, and thus, some credit Hua with ending it. Mao ordered the Red Guards suppressed in 1967 and claimed the CR over in 1969, although many of its policies were still in place in 1971, when a failed coup against Mao resulted in Lin Biao’s fall (then Mao’s designated successor and one of the CR’s chief architects). While it is reasonable to say the CR lasted from 1966 to 1976, it is also reasonable to view it as different if not contradictory stages that are difficult to label as a whole.

The CR emerged from many earlier experiences, including the Chinese Civil War (1927–50), China’s early and stunning political and economic successes (1949–58), and especially the Great Leap debacle that followed. The CR has especially deep roots in the shifting development of Mao’s thinking as a whole, reflecting his own ever-changing historical vision. Many trace the CR’s impetus specifically to the CPC’s Lushan Conference (1959) when criticisms of the Great Leap policies began in earnest, ostensibly by then Defense Minister Peng Dehuai. These criticisms ultimately culminated in Mao’s temporary political retreat—which began, actually, with Peng’s dismissal and his replacement with Lin Biao, who would in turn pave the way for Mao’s return via the CR. In fact, much of what is generally associated with the CR, from mass rallies to the propagation of the *Quotations from Chairman Mao* ([1964] 1967, the “Little Red Book”) and study groups were modeled on similar practices underway in the armed forces per Lin’s direction by 1963.

The CR should also be viewed in tandem with the Sino-Soviet split (1959–89), as well as the ongoing international struggles of the Cold War, and perhaps even various movements elsewhere for liberation, including struggles for independence throughout the developing world, particularly during the 1960s. It is not far-fetched to associate the CR with progressive-oriented movements in the West, including the student revolt in Paris in 1968, as well as with other efforts to broaden rights and political participation for the poor, for women, and for minorities. Conversely, some associate it negatively with the Soviet suppression of Czechoslovakia’s Prague Spring, also in 1968.

Consequences

A simple summary of the CR is nearly impossible, in part due to its complexity and in part because its study and discussion remain restricted in China itself. With scant reliable information, official or otherwise, many histories are little more than piecemeal guesswork while others skew polemically, often based on strongly biased and even fabricated accounts. Among anti-Maoists in and outside China, the CR is a favorite target for criticism, one that is generally assessed as the definitive statement of Maoism and as being on par with the worst excesses of Stalinism and Nazism. Both China's post-Mao, reform-era regime (1978–present) and reputable Western-based scholars have viewed the CR as a political and economic catastrophe of epic proportions, blaming it for tremendous losses to life, property and opportunity. Estimates of lives lost range from tens of thousands (derived indirectly from official accounts) to more than twenty million with scores more injured, although these low and high ends probably indicate gross under- and overestimations. However, a small but increasing number of Western and Chinese scholars have begun reevaluating the CR as well as its political, economic, and cultural consequences in more positive terms, although doing so remains deeply controversial if not taboo nearly everywhere.

One of the CR's primary focal points was a cult of personality centered on Mao and based on the Party's official adherence to Mao Zedong Thought, as well as the Party's military-oriented political culture, which made it and the nation susceptible to top-down campaigns. That said, several key factors led to the CR specifically. As already noted, one factor relates to Mao being sidelined after the Great Leap, though nominally still party chairman. Another relates to Mao's concern that Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping (who assumed leadership of the party-state in the Great Leap's wake) were implementing capitalist-leaning policies. These developments, along with China's increasing bureaucratism and Soviet revisionism, led Mao to conclude that China's socialist gains were threatened. Thus, the CR provided an opportunity for purging political enemies—Mao's own unambiguous “big character poster” at the start of the CR read, “Bombard the Headquarters.” However, it also opened the door to political wrangling by those trying to influence policy making and vying to be Mao's

successor, including Lin Biao, the Gang of Four, and others, especially during Mao's sharp physical decline in the 1970s.

Ultimately, while the CR achieved some of Mao's goals, including purging Liu and Deng (the latter survived, the former did not) and reconsolidating Mao's dominant position, the CR proved impossible to sustain. Economic production was hindered, schools and universities were completely disrupted, and warring factions took to the streets. As it unfolded, Mao expressed surprise at its intensity, but decided to let it run its course, as he said, to expose social and political contradictions and to provide a necessary vent for them. After the movement became too unwieldy, many would be sent "Down to the Countryside" to "learn from the peasants," a policy used in part for a new round of political indoctrination and as a means for reestablishing stability by emptying the cities of radicalized leftists and intransigent rightists and others. While most scorned being sent down then and now, many, including the peasants who received them, view those experiences as constituting an informative coming-of-age that helped prepare China for challenges to come.

Legacy

It is relatively common to see the CR referred to as Mao's last revolution. This is arguably true in a strictly temporal sense, coming as it did in the final years of his life. It also is sometimes assessed as noted above as the culminating if not definitive statement of Maoism or Mao Zedong Thought in theoretical terms, as Maoism's last gasp before the movement exhausted itself and was supplanted by Deng Xiaoping Theory and reform and opening up, and/or as Mao's final solution when it became clear that previous efforts to reach communism in the near term had come up short. Each of these views is problematic.

Although the CR was among the last major movements in Mao's life, there were others that can and perhaps should be viewed separately and not as constitutive elements of the CR itself. For example, Mao asserted that the CR had come to an end in 1969, and by then, efforts to open up to the West were already well underway, efforts that would lay the groundwork for the reform and opening up period that followed his death. Further, Mao

intentionally did much to mitigate if not reverse the CR, even describing himself as the “black-hand counterrevolutionary” as he chided warring Red Guard factions who were accusing each other of the same. Further, there is significant evidence showing that while Mao was indeed the CR’s dominant instigator, his role was more reactionary and likely smaller than is generally perceived.

At the same time, the CR is broadly consistent with Mao’s theory of revolution, which has sometimes been viewed mistakenly as being similar to Leon Trotsky’s notion of permanent revolution. In fact, Mao held that Marxism had two swords, which he described nominally as Leninism and Stalinism. In his view, the sword of Leninism provided a basis for mobilizing the masses against barriers to progress, while Stalinism provided a means for consolidating revolutionary gains. However, a permanent revolution in the vein of Leninism was too chaotic and exhausting to maintain over a long period of time and indeed was better suited to tearing down institutions than building them up. On the other hand, unchecked Stalinism led to Thermidorian bureaucratism, often becoming a staunch barrier to progress and much worse, of course. By 1956, Mao believed the USSR had lost both swords, insomuch as Joseph Stalin had suppressed the revolutionary character of Leninism while Nikita Khrushchev initiated de-Stalinization. Contrarily, Mao believed in a dialectic of progress where tearing down and building up must follow each other periodically. He argued that many similar revolutions would be required in the future as society advanced in fits and starts and predicted his CR might buy China a decade before some new effort would be required to stymie a new round of counterrevolutionary backsliding. In this sense, one might view the CR as a revolutionary phase within a longer revolutionary movement.

The CR has sometimes been viewed as an attempt to realize what Mao once referred to as “politics in command”—that is, as being driven primarily by revolutionary politics in lieu of being led by more conservative economic approaches. Analyses like these point to the CR as the sort of disaster that can result from such thinking. As a corollary, some also point to the post-Maoist reform and opening up period as economics in command, which initially neglected politics and resulted in its own tragedy in 1989. Such thinking is probably too simplistic. Nevertheless, the importance of

balancing both economic and political reforms, however poorly realized in actual practice, is one of the primary lessons drawn by the Party since 1989.

Some believe the CR was conceived in part as an attempt to bring social justice to China's poor and disenfranchised. Mao's concept of the Mass Line ("from the masses, to the masses"), along with his promise to bring big democracy to the masses, are consistent with stated CR goals, although both were always manipulated and then suppressed extensively by 1968.

Nevertheless, there is a growing body of literature that argues that the CR brought significant gains to workers and peasants, as well as to women, though many likewise argue those gains were largely reversed after Mao's death with reform and opening up. However, many minorities were targeted during the CR because Red Guards sometimes saw them as being backward if not separatist (a view that was not held officially by Mao or the Party itself).

One curious footnote is that although the CR was launched in part as a response to a growing U.S.- Soviet détente, the same would prompt China to initiate its own contacts with the United States in the late 1960s, with visits to Beijing by Henry Kissinger and Richard Nixon in the early 1970s. At the same time, this tension with the Soviets led China to support Cambodia's Khmer Rouge against Vietnam, then a Soviet ally, and even inspired Cambodia's own disastrous cultural revolution in the early to mid-1970s, despite the fact that China had largely moved past such thinking for itself.

The CR remains a major touchstone for many, and its legacy still influences politics and policy making. Many, even those born as late as the early 1970s, have direct memories of the CR. In its aftermath, term and age limits were implemented, as well as other reforms aimed at promoting the rule of law and preventing extremism and personality cults. However, many on the left believe Mao's suspicions of Deng and Liu proved well founded and judge Deng's reform and opening up as a return to levels of corruption, exploitation, and inequality unseen since 1949.

Josef Gregory Mahoney

See also [Chinese Marxism](#); [Chinese Political Thought](#); [Communism](#), [Varieties of](#); [Democratic Centralism](#); [Dictatorship of the Proletariat](#); [Lenin and Leninism](#); [Mao Zedong](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Revolution](#); [Russian Revolution](#), [Political Thought of the](#); [Stalin and Stalinism](#); [Totalitarianism](#); [Trotsky, Leon](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Chinese Marxism

Chinese marxism

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Chinese Marxism

Marxism came to China early in the twentieth century. Offering new approaches to concrete social and political problems, it would become the dominant strain of political thought. Marxist theories and active politics in China were intimately connected and over the long century of revolution, had a deep and continuing impact on the lives of hundreds of millions of people.

Early Developments

In the context of radical questioning of traditional thought and political revolution against the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), Marxist ideas were among an array of socialist theories introduced to China through Japan in the first decade of the century. Compared with anarchist thinkers such as Peter Kropotkin (1842–1921) and Michael Bakunin (1814–76), Karl Marx had little early appeal. While radical intellectuals found Marx's socialist goals attractive, China's relative lack of industry and a working class made Marxism appear unrelated to China's immediate problems.

It was the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, like China an agrarian, historically monarchical society, that made Marxism relevant. But it was not until two years later when the West granted Germany's Chinese colonial holdings to Japan at the end of World War I, that disillusionment with Western liberalism and a burst of political engagement in the 1919 May

Fourth Movement prompted Chinese intellectuals to take to Marxism in earnest. Li Dazhao (1888–1927) was the first to respond to the Russian Revolution and then to study seriously its underlying theory, publishing “My Marxist Views” by early 1919.

Early Marxists were immediately involved in urban labor organizing. Lacking background in social democratic thought, they were drawn to those aspects of Marxism, such as class struggle, that provided a basis for revolutionary action rather than to Karl Kautsky’s reformist version of Marxism. The materialist conception of history built on an earlier attraction to Social Darwinism and on a traditional Chinese concern with social conditions. Vladimir Illyich Lenin’s conception of a vanguard party provided the vehicle for immediate action, and his theory of imperialism gave China a place in world revolution. Young Chinese Marxists began with the ideas of late Marxism.

Chen Duxiu (1879–1942) and Li Dazhao, who had been his colleague at Beijing University, together formed the Chinese Communist Party in 1921. Two years later, under the guidance of the Comintern (the Communist International, 1919–43), the fledgling party allied with Sun Yat-sen’s larger Nationalist Party, heir to the 1911 Revolution and also by 1923 a Leninist organization. Marxism for now came largely filtered through Russian sources, and Qu Qiubai (1899–1935) introduced dialectical materialism as a universal interpretation of all phenomena, displacing the earlier historical materialism with its focus on concrete historical processes. While there would be little development of theory independent of practical politics, Marxism would spur significant new directions in historical and sociological research and literature.

Mao Zedong, the Great Leap Forward, and the Cultural Revolution

In 1927, politics again shaped theory after Chiang Kai-shek led the Nationalists to turn on the Communists, crushing the growing labor movement. Driven underground in the cities, a remnant of the Party reestablished itself in the countryside. There, Mao Zedong (1893–1976)

emerged dominant both politically and in the realm of theory. Two decades of warfare and a strategy of forming rural bases in the context of a peasant movement provided the grounding for new directions in Marxism. Much of Mao's prestige as a theoretician grew from his military successes, and his analysis of concrete military situations fed into a philosophical dialectical materialism. As was already evident in his "Report on an Investigation of the Hunan Peasant Movement" (1927) and echoing strains in Li Dazhao reminiscent of the Russian Narodniks, Mao located the potential for revolution in the peasantry. He was suspicious of cities and looked to bypass the development of capitalism. Mao's dialectical thinking and populism combined with voluntarism, a stress on the active will.

During the relative isolation of the Yan'an period (1936–48), with the time to read Marx and Lenin, Mao wrote "On Practice" and "On Contradiction" (1937). While these essays were the basis for Mao's claim to be a major Marxist theoretician, Mao's dialectics, populism, and voluntarism marked a divergence from Marx, and these characteristics of his thought would reemerge after the communist victory in 1949.

Initial successes in the 1950s in establishing a new state and political economy lent confidence to Maoists, while fear that history could turn backward accentuated the urgency of uninterrupted revolution. The year 1957, which saw Mao's "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People," was a turning point. Rejecting the Soviet model, China embarked on the disasters of the Great Leap Forward (1958–60), a utopian drive for grassroots industrialization, and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966–69/76), a chaotic, often violent mass movement launched in an attempt to reignite revolutionary spirit, confront contradictions with the vanguard party itself, and create a new man.

Chinese Marxist Thought After Mao

In the years since Mao's death in 1976, the Communist Party initiated the current period of reform and opening to the outside world. Official ideology has sought to bolster the legitimacy of the state with a ritualized Marxism immersed in practical developmentalism and nationalism. In an increasingly

diverse intellectual realm, there have been a series of creative attempts to revisit and develop Marx's thought.

The roots of new approaches lay in Cultural Revolution experiences, and in 1974, a group of young Red Guards wrote "On Socialist Democracy and the Legal System." Wang Xizhe (b. 1949), one of this group, was active in the Democracy Wall movement of 1979 between periods of imprisonment. Drawing directly on Marxist classics rather than later interpretations, Wang argued that Mao's mistakes grew from skipping over necessary historical stages of development. While still envisioning Party leadership, he began to write of Marx's concepts of alienation and human liberation with such articles as "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat Is a Humanitarian Dictatorship" (1980). Themes of humanism, democracy, the rule of law, and problems of development would run through the post-Mao period.

In reaction to the trauma of the Cultural Revolution, the 1980s brought a burst of new ideas, a New Enlightenment movement, and an attempt to restore Marxist universal values to Chinese socialism after the mistakes of Maoism. Reading György Lukács, Antonio Gramsci, Leszek Kolakowski, and the Frankfurt school and looking to the experiences of European social democracies, older intellectuals within the political establishment reached back to the early Marx of the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* to argue for Marxist humanism in support of reforms. Wang Ruoshui (1926–2002), then an editor of the party newspaper, *People's Daily*, criticized Stalinism and Maoism in "Man Is the Starting Point of Marxism" (1981). Chinese socialism had suppressed individuality, taking people as means rather than ends, where a humanistic Marxism would overcome alienation, treating human desires in individual, rather than class or national, terms. Su Shaozhi (b. 1922), for a time director of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, saw Marxism as in crisis in China and called for its thorough rethinking, a rejection of those elements that were no longer useful, and the integration of Marx's basic principles with Chinese reality. He argued that China's economy was still in the primary stage of socialism requiring mixed ownership, that the Party itself needed democratic reform. Su advocated for formal institutions of a people's democracy and concurred with Wang Ruoshui that humanism was at the heart of socialism.

While intellectuals such as Su Shaozhi and Wang Ruoshui argued from within Marxism and the establishment and others rejected Marxism altogether, the most influential thinker of the New Enlightenment is harder to categorize. Professor and Senior Research Fellow at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of Philosophy, Li Zehou (b. 1930) has drawn on Marx, Immanuel Kant, and Chinese traditional thought to develop a creative and comprehensive philosophy that reaches beyond the eighties and the Chinese context. Li Zehou holds that, although they played a positive role in the context of the 1980s, New Enlightenment thinkers were wrong to interpret Marxism as humanism. An emphasis on the individual alone is theoretically empty, unable to analyze history or the relation of individual and society. Marxism, Li Zehou argues, resonating with the earliest Chinese Marxists, is fundamentally a theory of history.

Returning to early Marx and the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Li Zehou finds that both later Marx and Marxists neglected his early ideas in their turn toward political action and revolution. Rather than Marxism as a theory of revolution or of criticism, Li Zehou takes up Marx's idea of humanized nature to philosophize the ongoing construction of human capacities of subjectivity and civilization grounded in historical materialism. To Marx's focus on the humanization of external nature and the creation of a technological-social structure, Li Zehou adds the building up of the internal nature of human beings for humankind through history and for individuals through education broadly understood. Through the making and use of tools over millions of years, human animals become rational animals with reason's categories of understanding, human emotions and ethics, and aesthetic feeling. The sedimentation, over history and through experience, of rationality within sensuality continuously forms a cultural-psychological structure of human subjectivity. In contrast to Mao's voluntarism, Li Zehou sees humans and nature as mutually entailed. Where a deterministic understanding of Marxist materialism takes the mind as a mirror, for Li Zehou the mind is an active subject. Li Zehou's philosophy looks to the creative activity of subjectivity in and through history. In doing so, it accounts simultaneously both for human capacities, human nature, in general, and for the unique meaning of individual lives.

After the violent suppression of the Democracy Movement in 1989, a new period of rapid economic growth and commercialization saw the professionalization of a new generation of intellectuals within academic institutions. Their pursuits became widely diverse and interconnected with those of intellectuals around the world. By the late 1990s, a new trend, dubbed the New Left, emerged in reaction now not to a crisis in Marxism consequent on the Cultural Revolution but to the complex social, economic, and political context of growing inequalities attendant on the rise of a market economy.

Even before the use of the term *New Left*, Cui Zhiyuan (b. 1963), then at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the United States and now a professor at Tsinghua University, published “Institutional Innovation and a Second Liberation of Thought” in 1994. Using Western theories of neoevolutionism, analytical Marxism, and critical legal studies, Cui called for liberation from the dogmas of liberalism and the market. Instead, he advocated reconsidering what is useful of China’s experience combined with the market to create innovative institutions addressing concrete problems in contemporary China. Without worrying about a definition of capitalism, Cui has been particularly interested in new forms of property rights and the possibilities of ownership as a bundle of different rights. He has studied the emergence of rural collective enterprises, seeing them as rooted in traditional forms of voluntary cooperation neither socialist nor capitalist and detecting the opportunity for a form of rural enterprise-led modernity. Cui was also an early supporter of the Chongqing model, which emphasized local political and social experimentation in pursuit of equality and common prosperity, in the capital of Sichuan Province before it was discredited in a massive corruption scandal in 2012. Cui wants to reduce the urban-rural gap, promote sustainable growth, and use public ownership and state planning to stimulate the private market, a sort of liberal socialism.

Concerns of Cui and others coalesced as a trend by 1996, and in 1997, a professor at Tsinghua University, Wang Hui (b. 1959) published what has been taken as the New Left’s manifesto, “Contemporary Chinese Thought and the Question of Modernity.” A review of intellectual trends since the beginning of the reform era, Wang’s article saw all theories, Marxist and non-Marxist, converging into global capitalism and implicated in the same

problem of modernity. Wang calls attention to the interweaving of issues of cultural, economic, and political democracy in the complexity of contemporary society. Rather than looking for a single grand theory, Wang calls for the transcendence of binaries and the confrontation of China's huge social inequities with concrete analyses and innovative approaches and institutions.

As intellectual debates continue in the face of growing social injustice and corruption, it is increasingly difficult to differentiate clearly among schools of thought, in particular between a New Left and liberalism. Beyond this debate, other voices, such as that of Lin Chun at the London School of Economics and Political Science, recover positive elements within a critical reassessment of the experience of socialism in China. Working from an early interest in Rosa Luxemburg, Lin Chun explores the potentials of revolution's unfulfilled promise of democracy and liberty in her book, *The Transformation of Chinese Socialism* (2006). Echoes of Marxist and Maoist phraseology recur throughout society beyond the realm of intellectuals, including in illegal labor protests. In 2002, a long letter from Li Changping, an obscure rural party official, to China's Premier, Zhu Rongji, two years earlier appeared in print as *Telling the Prime Minister the Truth*. Shocking in his detailing of layers of corruption and rural misery, Li Changping's touchstone was the Maoist critique, itself derived from Marx's "Critique of the Gotha Program," of the gaps between town and country, industry and agriculture, and mental and manual labor that he had absorbed as a child. While Marxism itself is no longer the dominant school of thought in China, China's socialist experiences and ideas serve as objects of criticism and sources of critique.

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See also [Capitalism](#); [Chinese Cultural Revolution](#); [Chinese Political Thought](#); [Communism, Varieties of](#); [Lenin and Leninism](#); [Lukács, György](#); [Mao Zedong](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Modernization](#); [Property, Theories of](#); [Revolution](#); [Russian Revolution, Political Thought of the](#); [Stalin and Stalinism](#); [Trotsky, Leon](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Chinese Political Thought

Chinese political thought

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Chinese Political Thought

Modern (xiandai) entered the Chinese lexicon in 1915, and then as a translation of the Western term. The start of China's push for modernity dates to roughly the same time. Building a secure, modern Chinese nation has been and perhaps remains one of the greatest challenges facing the development of political thought since the end of the nineteenth century. Few countries have endured as many political twists and turns as China has over the past century. Moving first away from dynastic feudalism under the Qing in 1911, then onward to a national republic riven by warlords and foreign invaders, while simultaneously fighting a long civil war before establishing the People's Republic of China (PRC) under communist control in 1949, China then experienced several more political, economic, and cultural revolutions in turn.

Early Nationalism

It has been argued that the modern concept of nation is a distinctly European invention, one that has no predecessor in dynastic China. Chinese emperors, known as the Sons of Heaven, had no peers. Many Chinese believed, at times quite reasonably, that China enjoyed the world's most advanced culture and state. Many believed that even conquerors, including the Mongolians and Manchus of the Yuan and Qing dynasties, found Chinese culture unsurpassable and thus became Chinese themselves. The Chinese did not think of themselves as a nation among other nations. This

sort of thinking continued in the face of Qing decline in the nineteenth century when foreign powers “carved up China like a melon.”

Starting in the 1840s, European powers secured concessions and spheres of influence in China following the Opium Wars and a series of unequal treaties. Internal rebellions weakened the Qing further, and in 1895 it suffered a major defeat to Japan, Asia’s first modern nation. It became clear to many that nationalistic modernization was necessary to save China as well, and in 1911 the Xinhai Revolution forced the Qing to abdicate. The Republic of China (ROC) was founded a year later.

May 4th Movement

The May 4th Movement in 1919 grew out of student demonstrations against Western and Japanese imperialism and China’s inability to protect itself. The political situation had worsened in China since 1911, and warlordism was on the rise. Despite being a new nation in name, in fact, few things had really changed. Sparked initially when the Treaty of Versailles gave Germany’s former concession in China to Japan, the May 4th Movement convinced many that only radical social and cultural changes could save the nation. The question was, Could one save China if radical change meant, culturally speaking, no longer being Chinese? This period produced what is sometimes described as a crisis of consciousness, precipitating a near free-for-all of intellectual and cultural soul searching for new ways forward.

Several major developments are worth noting. The first, given the mass protests that erupted, was a sense that effective mass political participation was both possible and necessary. Other developments include the emergence of *baihua*, which called for abandoning classical writing styles for vernacular, with the goal of making works more contemporaneous and accessible to a broader readership. Liberal, pragmatist, Marxist, anarchist, and other study groups formed, often targeting each other but especially Confucianism. In defense, New Confucianism emerged, but it did so by blending Chinese and Western philosophical ideas.

Sun Yat-sen’s Political Thought

Although many people contributed to the ROC's founding, Sun Yat-sen is remembered as the father of the nation. The centerpiece of Sun's thought is his *Three Principles of the People* (1905). The first principle, *minzu*, is usually translated as nationalism, but means more literally, populism or people's rule. The second, *minquan*, is frequently translated as democracy and means people's power. The third, *minsheng*, was ambiguously defined and has been the subject of much controversy ever since. Some interpret it as socialism, while others believe it merely calls for a social welfare system.

By 1915, the ROC had fallen into the Warlord Era, further fragmenting the nation and making it even more susceptible to foreign aggression. The diplomatic failures at Versailles and May 4th were clear signals that new directions were needed. In the meantime, the Bolshevik Revolution (1917) suggested that the Leninist party system was a possible solution to China's crises. In 1923, Sun's Nationalist Party or KMT (Kuomintang) accepted Soviet aid and advisors, reorganized along Leninist lines, and invited Chinese communists to join. Sun now theorized three successive revolutionary stages: military unification, political tutelage, and constitutional democracy. Accordingly, the KMT would begin a program of unifying the country through military force, then, impose a period of single-party rule, or political tutelage, through which the nation was prepared eventually for democracy.

Sun died of cancer in 1925 and was replaced with Chiang Kai-shek, head of the KMT's military. Chiang emphasized the first principle, nationalism, at the expense of the second, democracy, and argued against socialistic interpretations of the third. With the Communist Party of China (CPC) scattered in 1927 and the warlords increasingly brought to heel by 1928, he believed China had largely achieved the first stage, military unification, and was then in the midst of the second, political tutelage under a single party.

Mao Zedong Thought

Students returning from studies and work abroad, particularly in Japan and France, were among the first to introduce Marxism to China. After the Bolshevik Revolution, the flow of Marxist materials increased and several

study groups were formed, the most significant at Peking University, which included several who would later form the nucleus of the CPC when it was founded in Shanghai in 1921. Many others would attend special programs established in Moscow for Chinese students. Moscow's advisors and support played large and various roles in the party until the mid-1930s, when Mao Zedong Thought displaced it.

The main idea of this Moscow-based way of thinking was, by 1927, a post-Leninist form of Soviet dogmatism, one that tended toward cookiecutter approaches to revolution as well as a strict adherence to Marxist theory of political development. This included the idea that a properly Marxist revolution could only be led by an urban, factory-based proletariat and could only follow a period of bourgeois rule. This idea did not change until Chiang started attacking the CPC. Moscow's response was to push the CPC into a Leninist-style revolution against the KMT in 1927, resulting in disaster.

After investigating peasant uprisings in Hunan in 1926, Mao was convinced, contrary to Marxist proletarianism, that peasants could play a progressive role in fomenting revolutionary change. Instead of fighting in the cities where the CPC was weak, Mao proposed building the Party in the countryside and pursuing guerrilla warfare, ideas that were rejected completely by his comrades. After the Party's terrible defeat following the 1927 uprising and again after the Party suffered further losses when directly confronting Chiang's KMT forces, Mao's thought gained ascendancy. Further refined in Yan'an, a western-base area reached following the Long March, Mao Zedong Thought was embraced fully and officially by the CPC.

Mao advanced a number of ideas that ran counter to both classical and orthodox Marxism, including the idea of a rural-based revolution and more significantly, the idea that the Party must learn from the people. Mao described this as following the Mass Line or "from the people, to the people." Guerrilla warfare became the norm until CPC forces were capable of more direct engagements. As the Party gained its footing, Mao formulated the idea of a New Democracy, one in which the transition to a socialist state did not first require a period of bourgeois rule.

In addition, synthesizing Chinese and Marxist thought, Mao emphasized the importance of properly handling contradictions as a means for guiding struggles to productive ends. This aspect of his thought deepened throughout his time in power, reaching an apex in the intensive class struggles that he encouraged periodically, but most especially during the Cultural Revolution (1966–76).

Mao's Great Leap Forward policies (1958–61) attempted impossible economic gains in a short period of time and resulted in serious famines and increasing instability. This instability led to Mao being sidelined briefly, though still chair of the CPC. He staged a comeback with the Cultural Revolution, during which a massive cult of personality was used to purge political opponents, primarily at the hands of paramilitary groups, Red Guards, who were devoted to him. More than this, the Cultural Revolution also targeted traditionalism and bourgeois influences, asserting that the only real barriers to successfully completing the communist revolution lay in ridding society of incorrect thinking. To be sure, he emphasized technology and scientific development, but he remained deeply suspicious of intellectuals and party elites, whom he viewed as having inherently counterrevolutionary tendencies. In his later years, he proved adept at playing leftist, rightist, and centrist factions against each other, but with the view that each had something to contribute to China's development.

With his Three Worlds Theory, Mao argued that revolution had its true impetus in the third world inasmuch as developed countries of the first world prefer the status quo, while countries in the second have been subjugated to the extent that revolution is effectively stymied. He broke with the Soviet Union over Nikita Khrushchev's de-Stalinization campaign and what Mao viewed as the betrayal of revolutionary internationalism as the USSR moved toward détente with the United States in the 1960s. Ultimately, however, he would initiate China's own opening up by hosting U.S. President Richard Nixon in Beijing in 1973.

Deng Xiaoping Theory

China's second paramount leader after Mao Zedong was Deng Xiaoping. Deng promptly assessed Mao as being only 70 percent correct and launched

several political and economic reforms designed to jump-start China's economic development and promote political stability. However, Deng recognized that the CPC's legitimacy was based ontologically on Mao's thought, and he was careful to maintain Mao Zedong Thought in several important senses. In particular, Deng focused on Mao's mantra to "seek truth from facts," which provided the basis for embarking on a new version of scientific socialism, which under Deng would include a socialist market economy and socialism with Chinese characteristics.

These concepts were rationalized in dialectical terms that had roots in both Confucian and Maoist thought. In the *Book of Rites*, Confucius discusses the quest for *datong*, or great unity or the Grand Course, which Mao and others viewed as being analogous to communism. In lieu of revolution, Confucius recommends building a well-ordered society that steadily improves through good governance. The first goal is to construct a *xiaokang* society, what Confucius describes as a "small comforts society" and what Deng describes as a "moderately well-off society." Building a *xiaokang* society, one that progresses toward *datong*, remains a central CPC goal. Assessing the country's progress to date, Deng said that China was presently only in the "early stage of socialism and would be so for a long time to come."

While Deng was amenable to a more open political culture and the possibility of political reform, he insisted on maintaining the CPC's Leninist system and China's one-party state. To this end, he promulgated the Four Cardinal Principles, which required upholding "the basic spirit of Communism, the People's democratic dictatorship, the leadership of the Communist Party, and Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought." While some might read these principles as rather stifling, in fact, what they signaled was a greater openness than before. In other words, while these four principles were not open to discussion, everything else was.

In addition, Deng promoted the Four Modernizations, which called for modernizing China's agriculture, industry, national defense, and science and technology. While Mao had asserted that the primary contradiction facing China was found in class struggle, Deng argued that it should be found

instead in China's lack of development, a fact that left China both backward and vulnerable.

In terms of international policy, despite waging a brief but deadly war in Vietnam as a pushback against the Soviet Union in 1978, Deng declared peace and development were the main trends of the times, eschewing any hints of internationalism. These developments were central to his opening up policies, which in addition to opening up to the West for the purpose of facilitating trade, technology transfer, and increased security, were conducive to one country, two systems, which he proposed as a framework for reunifying Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan with the mainland.

One of the most famous quotes attributed to Deng is, "It doesn't matter whether a cat is white or black, as long as it catches mice," which many read as a turn away from Marxism and toward a more pragmatic approach. In fact, if this quote is placed in the broader context of his work, and further, if pragmatism is defined in a Western philosophical sense, then it is more appropriate to say Deng's thinking adheres to the Marxist concept of praxis. In other words, Deng was not driven by some pragmatist version of whatever works; rather, he was interested in the relationship between theory and practice, how one could be used to enrich and further the other in a progressive movement toward socialism if not communism.

Jiang Zemin came to power when his predecessor, Zhao Zhiyang, was sacked for his handling of the crisis in Tiananmen Square in 1989. Coming from Shanghai, where he was a strong advocate of Deng's economic reforms, Jiang's first several years in power were overshadowed by Deng who, despite being officially retired, was in fact still China's paramount leader. Jiang's early role was to protect as much as possible economic reforms that were threatened by policy leftists and moderates who worried that reform and opening up had gone too far and then to advance them strongly again starting in 1992 when it became politically feasible to do so.

Jiang's main contribution to Chinese political thought is known as the Three Represents, heavily promoted from 2000 and stipulating that the CPC should represent China's "advanced productive forces," "the progressive course of China's advanced culture," and "the fundamental interests of the majority." In many respects, the purpose of the Three Represents was to

explicitly theorize if not legitimize political adjustments necessitated by reform and opening up and the rise of the socialist market economy. The dramatic changes in Chinese society resulting from these developments created new socioeconomic classes and the CPC needed a basis for including these as well as capitalists in the Party itself, or at least representing their interests. At the same time, economic reforms produced rising income inequality as well as regional disparity, including urban versus rural divides. Under Mao, the CPC was responsible first to urban workers and rural farmers and opposed to their class enemies. But with Deng's reforms, China entered a period where class enemies were now required to play a central role in China's overall development. In fact, perhaps the key to understanding the Three Represents can be found in its dialectically oriented concerns of representing contradictory values and interests, and to do so in a way that enhanced the CPC's Leninist democratic dictatorship. Overall, Jiang's contributions should be viewed primarily as a development of Deng Xiaoping Theory.

When Hu Jintao replaced Jiang as head of the Party, state, and military apparatuses in 2002, the tradition of promulgating a contribution to official political thought was continued. Chief among these was Hu's scientific development concept, which called for a scientific socialism of sustainable development, increased humanism, democracy, and social welfare, which would in turn contribute to the creation of a harmonious society. In addition, Hu called for moral education and promoted what he termed the Eight Honors and Eight Shames, emphasizing patriotism, public service, unity, honesty, and so on. Officially, Hu's developments were described as an updating of Chinese Marxism; however, many analysts have argued that the discussion of morality and further, harmony, represents a decisive post-Maoist if not post-Marxist shift. Others detect elements of Confucianism. However, still others argue that Confucianism has always permeated Chinese Marxism, despite official criticisms of the same under Mao, and further, that the concept of harmony figured prominently in Mao's thought as well, especially in the Yan'an period, and that it was also present in the *datong-xiaokang* dialectic of Deng Xiaoping Theory (see earlier discussion).

Schools and Factions

Despite being a one-party state, China is a large and diverse society, one that is deeply conversant with many different schools of political thought around and through which much discussion and debate occurs today, with some of it influencing policy making. In fact, the Party itself hosts many different schools, some of which make up the principal factions at work in the Party today. It has become somewhat conventional even to refer to eight schools of political thought as being in contention with each other, both in and outside of government. These include the old left, the new left, liberals, social democrats, New Confucians, nationalists, populists, and the Party's official school, socialism with Chinese characteristics. Many of these are expressed as developments within the Marxist tradition, while some are more or less at odds with it. The old Left includes those who advocate a return to or developments of either a strong form of Maoism or Marxism or both. The new left, which was in its heyday in the 1980s and 1990s, was influenced in part by the Western New Left while being more rooted in China-specific debates, especially with Chinese liberals, who were likewise influenced by their Western counterparts and whose heyday largely mirrored that of the new leftists. Meanwhile, the social democrats have drawn inspiration primarily from European states that they view as having robust democratic social welfare systems worth emulating. New Confucianism, which as discussed above first emerged in the wake of May 4th, was effectively suppressed on the mainland during the Mao years, but returned thereafter, perhaps even influencing policy making, as some argue with respect to Hu Jintao's harmonious society campaign, as well other initiatives, including China's government-funded international network of Confucius Institutes (although officially, the primary goal of the latter is to promote the study of Chinese language). Meanwhile, unsurprisingly, nationalists tend to emphasize nationalism, while populists tend to emphasize populism. Several schools overlap; for example, one might basically advocate old left ideas but frame them with a Confucian veneer, be a staunch nationalist and a populist, and be an active CPC member in good standing.

Every period of modern Chinese history has had its share of factions and cliques committed to a particular way of thinking, both in and outside the CPC. For example, during the early years of the CPC, there were two main factions, pro-Moscow and pro-Mao. During Mao's rule, there were several

as well and they are usually typed as being left, right, or center. In post-Mao China, the CPC struggled initially to move from its more stridently Maoist aspects to Deng Xiaoping Theory, a change that proved difficult for many to make. During the Deng years, elite politics continued and often proved factional. It was under Deng that the Shanghai Clique emerged, generally described as being both urban and elitist, especially with Jiang Zemin's elevation to power in the wake of 1989, and subsequently, the Tuanpai faction, under Hu, which emerged from Hu's powerbase, the Young Communist League, and is generally described as being more populist and rural in its orientation. It has been argued that Shanghai versus Tuanpai factionalism stymied efforts for political reform during the Hu years. In addition, other groups exist in one form or another, even nongroups such as the so-called princes' party, which includes the children of former high-ranking officials who have now entered politics and who are sometimes viewed suspiciously as the beneficiaries of nepotism.

Minority Parties in the PRC

Under the rubric of a United Front, there are eight legally recognized minor parties and one union that operate under the leadership of the CPC, with a certain number of positions reserved for them in government. United Front members include the Revolutionary Committee of the Kuomintang (an offshoot of the KMT that split with Chiang in 1948 and views itself as the true inheritor of Sun's political thought), China Democratic League (a coalition of Third Way—i.e., neither KMT nor CPC—democrats advocating both patriotism and socialism, formed in 1939), China Democratic National Construction Association (an offshoot of the China Democratic League, from which it split in 1945 and which advocates market socialism today), China Association for Promoting Democracy (advocating a center-left, social democracy, also formed in 1945), Chinese Peasants' and Workers' Democratic Party (advocating socialism, formed in 1927, its original members consisting primarily of former left-wing members of the KMT and CPC, many of whom had been expelled from both parties), China Party for Public Interest (founded in 1925 and consisting primarily of overseas Chinese or those with overseas connections, originally advocating federalism and multi-party democracy, it turned left in 1947, and has advocated national reunification since 1949),

September 3 Society (founded September 3, 1945, the date of Japan's defeat in the Sino-Japanese War, and advocating a rising China), Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League (consisting originally of CPC members who survived the infamous 228 Incident of KMT suppression in Taiwan in 1947, advocating socialism; one country, two systems; and Taiwanization), and the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce (a national but nominally nongovernmental chamber of commerce, formed in 1953, and which serves as a bridge between government and the private sector).

Dissidence

Dissidents have long contributed to China's political thought, though most have done so indirectly through activism. While many have made direct contributions to dissident thought in the People's Republic of China, three should be mentioned here. First is Liu Xiaobo, a dissident writer closely connected with Charter 08, a program calling for a slate of political reforms, including the end of one-party rule, federalism, an independent judiciary, freedom of association and religion, environmental protection, free markets and private property protection, and so on. Sentenced to eleven years imprisonment in 2009, Liu was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010. Second is Li Zehou, a leading academic who was central to much of the critical political thought that emerged in the 1980s and who was persecuted in the aftermath of 1989. Now living in exile, he advocates Sinification of Western concepts of human and civil rights and the rule of law. Although his work is not well known among China's younger generation, it remains influential with academics who were students in the 1980s and 1990s, and further, it can be argued that some of his goals have been embraced by policy makers over the past decade. Third is Wei Jingsheng, a central figure of the Democracy Wall Movement (1978–79), who proposed a fifth modernization-democracy in response to Deng Xiaoping's promotion of Zhou Enlai's earlier call for Four Modernizations (see above), although Wei's contributions were largely a footnote to dissident discussions after Deng's tenure in power.

Josef Gregory Mahoney

See also [Chinese Cultural Revolution](#); [Chinese Marxism](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Empire and Political Thought](#); [Lenin and Leninism](#); [Mao Zedong](#); [Modernization](#); [Nationalism](#); [Populism](#); [Revolution](#); [Russian Revolution](#); [Political Thought of the](#); [Socialism](#); [Stalin and Stalinism](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [Totalitarianism](#)

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Chomsky, Noam

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Chomsky, Noam

Avram Noam Chomsky (1928–) is known as a libertarian socialist-anarcho-syndicalist, an American dissident, and Emeritus Professor of Linguistics and Philosophy at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. During the 1950s, Chomsky's theory of generative grammar rejected behaviorist accounts of language acquisition and produced a revolution in the field of linguistics. He came to political prominence in the early 1960s when he took a public stand, knowing he might be jailed, against United States involvement in Vietnam. Since then, Chomsky has chosen to use his privileged position as an intellectual (with access to information and resources) to continue to speak out against the American state's involvement in the Middle East, the Pacific region, Central America, and Asia.

During a lively Jewish upbringing in Philadelphia, Chomsky experienced both the impact of anti-Semitism and the Depression, writing his first political article on fascism at the age of ten. Later, he spent much time with members of the intensely intellectual but poor Jewish working class who engaged in impassioned debates around his uncle's newsstand in New York City. These political and cultural antecedents generated in Chomsky a deep mistrust of elites and unaccountable power. He regards laissez-faire capitalism and state control of production alike as autocratic and nondemocratic. Both involve the domination of productivity and human creativity. Neither system puts control in the hands of ordinary people, so neither system can be associated with freedom or the opportunity for self-fulfillment through one's labor.

Chomsky's politics is based, theoretically, on a critique of social and political affairs and a vision of a society in the service of humanity. Whether they acknowledge it or not, all political critiques rest upon an account of human nature. While acceding that there is no empirical proof for any account of human nature, Chomsky's own critique and analysis is self-consciously hopeful. Humans have a naturally creative urge and a need to control their own life and labor. Our instinct for liberty is not, however, in the liberal sense of individuals being autonomous and atomistic, but rather because our creative capacities demand the possibility of cooperative, interdependent mutuality.

Given this universal view of human nature, Chomsky argues for a society that promotes freedom and diversity. This contention is at the heart of his libertarian critique of the state. With its *raison d'être* to coalesce power in the hands of elites, particularly corporate elites, the state is a form of social organization that is fundamentally inimical to these human needs. Unwaveringly, the core of his political writings is informed by this approach.

Since the 1960s, quite apart from his work in linguistics, Chomsky has published upward of a book a year, directing his critical gaze at American foreign policy. His specific focus and method reveals conscious, deliberate political choices. First, he is of the view that, as an American citizen (the United States having a disproportionate influence in the affairs of other peoples), he is more likely to have an impact exposing the duplicity within the rhetoric of his own government. Second, although elite power is not homogenous and there are fluctuations within and between elites, the government and the state claim (and fail) to act democratically. By contrast, corporate elites make no such promise. Third, by using the media as a lens, Chomsky exposes not only the contradictions in the government's own account of itself, but also raises doubts about the extent to which the media seek truth and operate as a fourth estate.

Chomsky's intellectual and value commitment to humanity has led him to interrogate the words and actions of those who claim to represent the general interest or the interests of humanity. Empirically, he finds that the government, state, and media's interpretation of events is heavily biased

toward particular or general U.S. property and other elite interests rather than those of ordinary American citizens, let alone humanity in its most universal sense.

While Chomsky argues that the social sciences can never be predictive and explanatory in the way the natural sciences are, he is nevertheless of the view that we must still evaluate and interpret political events by critically analyzing the available empirical evidence, while also employing logic, intuition, and imagination. In a televised debate with philosopher Michel Foucault in 1971, he found no historical justification for the claim that concepts such as justice are mere social artifacts, arguing instead that in his view there is evidence that we are groping our way toward humane concepts of justice and decency. This belief, broadly speaking, places his work within the critical realist tradition, although his own view is that he is not a theorist, simply a concerned and responsible citizen.

Alison Edgley

See also [American Political Thought](#); [Anarchism](#); [Autonomy](#); [Capitalism](#); [Empire and Political Thought](#); [Foucault, Michel](#); [Human Nature](#); [Theories of](#); [Libertarianism](#); [Socialism](#)

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Christian Socialism

Christian socialism

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Christian Socialism

The linkage of socialism with Christianity has always been contentious, causing alienation among Christians who did not want to be considered as socialists and vice versa. The classic example of Christian Socialism is the English movement established in London in April 1848 by J. M. Ludlow, Charles Kingsley, and F. D. Maurice in response to a failed Chartist march. A manifesto was produced, “To the Working Men of England,” that confirmed their role as Christian Socialists, although the term was not used until 1850. The founders were not socialists in the later political sense, and their efforts to attract a working-class readership with their pamphlets failed as they were too moderate to satisfy the mood of growing unrest. They did, however, share a belief in cooperation and provided a radical alternative to the prevalent Christian orthodox message of the unquestioning acceptance of social and economic injustice.

The meetings of the newly formed Christian Socialists in 1848 were designed to establish some definitive policies among a group who were certainly not homogeneous. Maurice and Kingsley were more enlightened Tories than socialists. Through Ludlow, who was educated in France, the Christian Socialists learned of the ideas not only of Charles Fourier, but also of Pierre Leroux, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, and Louis Blanc, and they were only too ready to acknowledge the debt. The English movement of 1848 to 1853 had thus some association with the contemporary French one. Another member of the group, Lloyd Jones, was a well-educated master tailor and self-professed Owenite socialist. Jones was skeptical about

Christianity but still very enthusiastic about the plans of the movement and able to add to their knowledge of socialism.

One of the achievements of the English movement was the establishment of the Working Men's College in London in 1854. Among those who taught at the College were John Ruskin and Frederic Harrison, both of whom demonstrated an interest in the cooperative method of continental socialism, although they interpreted it in different ways. Harrison adopted the positivism of Auguste Comte, while Ruskin developed a utopian ideal of a form of social paternalism underpinned by Christian morality.

The Christian Socialists ceased to function as an organized unit in 1854, but their influence lived on through the work of a few scattered individuals, some of whom proved to be very influential in the socialist renaissance in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Christianity, as preached by the established church, was perceived to have failed to address the needs of the working classes and was further challenged by the emergence of numerous politically and socially active groups and individuals. One disparate group of reformers worked under the common pennant of a revived Christian Socialism, taking their inspiration from the first Christian Socialists of the 1850s. A large part of this socialist revival was, if not orthodox Christian, at least ethical in nature. The revived movement's leaders were primarily nonconformist in their beliefs, and they operated in most large cities where they exerted a strong influence among working-class audiences. They were not actively radical but rather combined their politics with their preaching as a matter of course, many of them preferring to remain detached from direct political action. There was some dispute among socialist adherents as to the compatibility of religion and politics, but many on the Christian left saw the policies of Christianity and socialism as inextricably interrelated.

In terms of influence on the socialist cause, the English Christian Socialist Movement has a complex relevance. The early movement saw its function as mainly ethical and educative rather than the promotion of social engineering or political legislation. It was anticollectivist, favoring small-scale cooperative enterprise and adult education as the way out of working-class poverty. By the end of the century, in a climate of economic depression, the focus of Christian Socialists was more political. Their

preaching was directed at specific examples of economic injustice and exploitation as highlighted in Ruskin's *Unto This Last*. Ruskin deplored the culture of competition and underpinned his opposition to laissez-faire economic policy with a Christian emphasis on brotherhood and cooperation. This ethical approach was inspirational for many newly emergent labor members, and under the banner of the Independent Labour Party, it became the dominant form.

In the United States, the experience was slightly different. During a period of social unrest at the end of the nineteenth century, there was considerable tension between labor and religion. To combat this tension, there was a unique and concerted effort by religious leaders not to Christianize socialism but to spread an awareness and appreciation of undiluted socialism among people of religious belief. This effort led to a more harmonious relationship between ethical idealists and labor activists.

Christian Socialism may therefore be seen as primarily the successful and lasting contribution of groups of intellectuals to the raising of awareness of social deprivation and the desperate need for urgent social and economic reform within a religious or ethical context.

Gill Cockram

See also [Chartism](#); [Fourier, Charles](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Owen, Robert](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Ruskin, John](#); [Socialism](#)

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Citizenship

Citizenship

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Citizenship

In the simplest terms, citizenship is a legal status that bestows equal membership and rights, including the right to political participation, and gives rise to duties relating to citizens of a bounded community. As such, citizenship indicates some type of belonging or identification between the citizen and her community. Since the early 1990s, however, citizenship has also been ascribed a thick description by scholars and politicians alike, as it has increasingly come to represent what A. Favell has described as “a litmus test of the nature of liberal democracy generally” (2001, 1). The different meanings of citizenship are, therefore, both strongly contested according to Ruth Lister (2003) and always contextual according to Birte Siim (2000). Broadly speaking, current debates within political theory, and sociology-social policy about the theorization and meaning of citizenship, led by authors such as Richard Bellamy (2008) or Lister (2003), respectively, center on the extent to which the concept can be extended beyond its narrower definition, as primarily comprising rights and duties, to being conceptualized more broadly. So, for example, some theorists, notably Nira Yuval-Davis (1999), have argued that citizenship should be viewed as a multilayered concept since citizens have rights and obligations in all of the communities (layers) to which they belong, including local, ethnic, religious, national, regional, and transnational as well as international communities. Most recently, the argument has been made that citizenship is also multidimensional, especially when viewed from a gendered perspective, insofar as citizenship rights and obligations cut

across a number of key dimensions, including the political, social, economic, sexual, bodily, and intimate dimensions (see Halsaa, Roseneil, and Sumer 2012).

In addition, contemporary theorists of citizenship such as Y. N. Soysal (1994), G. Delanty (2000), Linda Bosniak (2006), M. M. Howard (2009), and C. Joppke (2010) have busied themselves with what R. Baubock and V. Guiraudon (2009, 439) have termed the “realignments of citizenship” in the global north, triggered by the twin phenomena of increased patterns of migration, on one hand, and multilevel governance (both substate and supranational) on the other. Delanty (2000) contends that although the theorization of citizenship was originally dominated by political scientists, the challenges to citizenship resulting from the processes of globalization have opened the way for other social scientists to make valuable contributions to this scholarship. Citizenship studies today is, thus, a burgeoning interdisciplinary field of study. Within this field, wide-ranging academic interventions have challenged the universalism that is assumed to underpin citizenship.

Feminist scholars have highlighted the ways in which access to the rights and privileges deriving from citizenship have been constrained for women: see, for example, important contributions from Mary Dietz (1987), Siim (2000), and Lister (2003). Feminist scholars have also highlighted the pitfalls of traditional conceptualizations of citizenship in relation to other disadvantaged groups (apart from women), such as ethnic minority and migrant communities: as in the work of Iris Marion Young (1989), Yuval-Davis and Pnina Werbner (1999), and Gail Lewis (2004). One of the foremost proponents of a feminist reappropriation of the concept of citizenship is Lister (1997, 2003), who has outlined three important steps for feminist theorizations of, and activism relating to, citizenship. The first task is to show how women’s exclusion has been central to the historical and traditional conceptualizations of the liberal and republican approaches to citizenship that have been prevalent in European settings. Anne Phillips (1995) and Sylvia Walby (1997) have also made important contributions in this regard. The second task is to challenge the false universalism of the category woman and to centralize the issue of difference, and the third task

is to address the tension between a gender analysis that is grounded in difference, and the inherent universalism of citizenship (Lister 1997, 197).

A second notable group of scholars who have made valuable contributions to current debates about citizenship are concerned with the relationship between racialized, ethnic, and religious differences and citizenship. Anniken Hagelund (2007, 128) has noted that multicultural has come to signify both the reality of cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity within societies (usually those in the global north) and political ideologies of multiculturalism that seek to establish policy processes that recognize the claims of diverse groups. Will Kymlicka (1995, 2007) has argued that “multiculturalism is first and foremost about developing new models of democratic citizenship, grounded in human rights ideals, to replace earlier uncivil and undemocratic relations of hierarchy and exclusion” (2010, 101). Accordingly, Kymlicka’s concept of multicultural citizenship (which is, of course, context specific) is based on the ideal of not suppressing differences but of filtering and framing them “through the language of human rights, civil liberties and democratic accountability” (2010, 100). He makes a distinction between new forms of multicultural citizenship for indigenous peoples (such as the Saami populations in the Nordic region), for national minorities (such as the Flemish and the Walloons in Belgium), and for immigrant groups in Western democracies (2010, 101).

Finally, the intensified (forced as well as voluntary) migratory practices that broadly characterize the globalization processes of the mid- to late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, have also led scholars to re-imagine the concept of citizenship. Hence, the development of transnational, postnational, and cosmopolitan approaches to citizenship by Baubock (1994), Soysal (1994), and Delanty (2000), respectively. Within this type of literature, the focus has recently turned toward the exclusionary tendencies that are as inherent a part of citizenship as its assumed universality. An important example is Bosniak’s work (2006) on alienage—that is, the condition of noncitizens in liberal democracies with a focus on the United States. This is a noteworthy turn in citizenship studies because it addresses how liberal democracies deal with, and attempt to reconcile, citizenship’s internal (normative and analytic) contradictions: the twin commitments to universalism and exclusion.

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See also [Community](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Ethnicity and Political Thought](#); [Feminism](#); [Globalization](#); [Liberalism](#); [Republicanism](#); [Rights, Civil](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Civil Disobedience

Civil disobedience

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Civil Disobedience

Civil disobedience involves protest or illicit action based on an individual's prioritizing of obligations to religion, humanity, conscience, and legal codes of city, state, and nation. Lawbreakers commit themselves to ignoring or violating codified laws that disrespect or contravene spiritual or humanistic truths. As a concerted demand for human rights and freedoms, civil disobedience by marginalized groups targets the disenfranchisement of racial and religious minorities, immigrants, laborers, refugees, and women and children. Illegal actions range from the unfurling of forbidden flags and banners, concealment of runaway slaves and draft dodgers, sit-ins in government buildings, and nonviolent obstruction of trains and convoys to the dismantling of torture chambers, ruination of files and records, and vandalism against artillery and war planes.

During the colonial era, Bartolomé de Las Casas launched a radical evangelism against the inhuman treatment of Mesamerican press gangs by Spaniards. From the 1620s, Baptists and Jehovah's Witnesses flouted laws of an obdurate Puritan theocracy requiring Sunday worship and denying rights of conscience and assembly to dissenters. Pacifist Quakers and Rogerenes rebelled against the arming and drilling of standing militias and refused to pledge allegiance to uniformed regiments or to pay military taxes or perform alternative service.

The growing acquisition of wealth and prestige by European male conquerors aroused rebellion in the underclass. In the 1760s, the antics and

plots of U.S. Liberty Men, Regulators, and the Sons and Daughters of Liberty forced the government of England's George III to reexamine cries for independence that resulted in the American Revolution. In Venezuela in 1817, Simón Bolívar threatened Spanish hegemony by raising an army of Haitians. Under the influence of Henry David Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience* ([1848] 2009), Canadian, Caribbean, and U.S. protesters rallied for even fuller realization of citizenship and an end to the Mexican-American War.

Abolitionists and Jamaican maroons promoted flights from bondage as a rightful emancipation of African slaves. Teachers violated state laws denying literacy to blacks by opening illegal classrooms; black urbanites banded into extralegal police forces to shield the vulnerable from kidnap and sale at slave auctions. A budding feminist backlash against the concubinage of slave women and girls pressed white women into pickets against enslavers and boycotts of slave-made cotton, molasses, and pharmaceuticals. By the 1870s, labor strikes, the peace movement, and woman's suffrage honed the skills of Susan Brownell Anthony, Emma Goldman, Mother Jones, and Alice Paul as crusaders against polygamy, repression, and violence.

In the early 1900s, freedom fighters resisted blatant exploitation of child labor, immigrant miners, refugees, chain gangs, and Native Americans coerced to live in squalor on Indian reservations. Carry Nation focused outrage on brothels and saloons. Dr. Marie Stopes opened birth control clinics in London to enable women to regulate family size.

Both world wars reignited peace lovers to march, chant, and block enlistment centers to thwart the drafting of combat-age males. Simmering racial inequities burst once more into headlines as blacks fought white supremacy in South Africa, Japanese Americans contested internment in quasi-concentration camps, and black U.S. soldiers violated Jim Crow laws that remanded them to second-class consumerism in bars and restaurants and on public transportation. In 1930, Mohandas Gandhi led a nonviolent protest against a salt tax and formulated strategy for ousting the British from India. The bombing of Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, galvanized antibomb sentiments in seeking to prevent a global catastrophe.

Globally, the late twentieth century echoed with outcries against animal and human torture, Canadian gun laws, the state of Israel, endangerment of species, war in Vietnam, and world hunger. Controversy resounded over Filipino agitation against Ferdinand Marcos, an Indian occupation of Alcatraz, same-sex marriage, and Zapatista prison sabotage. The disregard of unjust laws precipitated incarceration for leaders Nelson Mandela, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and Aung San Suu Kyi, who served fifteen years of house arrest for assailing tyranny in Burma. The vocal protest by 100,000 Beijing students at Tiananmen Square in April 1989 and a hunger strike in May preceded a symbolic pose of civil disobedience—one man standing alone before a tank column at the risk of execution.

Awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize drew public attention to the insubordination of revolutionary Le Duc Tho to French colonialism, the Dalai Lama's support of a Tibetan mutiny against Chinese occupation, humanist Adolfo Esquivel's destabilization of an Argentine military junta, and Russian activist Andrei Sakharov's insubordination of Russian militarism. The spring of 2011 spread discontent among Islamic dissenters in Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia to overthrow tyrants and extend democratic rights to males and especially to veiled women. In historic instances, the line between civil disobedience and civil war stretched thin.

Mary Ellen Snodgrass

See also [Animal Rights](#); [Black Power](#); [Citizenship](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Empire and Political Thought](#); [Environmentalism](#), [Ecology](#), and [Political Thought](#); [Feminism](#); [Gandhi, Mohandas \(Mahatma\)](#); [Irish Political Thought](#); [King, Martin Luther, Jr.](#); [Liberty](#), [Theories of](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Obedience, Political](#); [Race and Racism](#); [Rights, Civil](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Rule of Law](#); [Suffragettes](#), [Political Thought of the](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [War and Political Thought](#)

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Civil Society

Civil society

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Civil Society

Civil society is a key concept in modern political thought and like many such, is much disputed. The term, although sometimes used in very different ways, plays a central role in a variety of political theories, including classical liberal and libertarian, Marxist, social democratic, and conservative theories.

The concept and the term emerged in Europe out of the medieval communes, which were generally oath-based fellowships of citizens. The term *civil* comes from the Latin *civitas*, which refers to a city in its juridical—rather than physical—existence. It has since come to refer, not only to the legal and political orders of such cities, but to the standard mode of behavior—civility—that characterized them and the voluntary and contractual nature of their relationships. Civil behavior allows unrelated persons to interact on a basis of mutual respect. It does not require an overarching loyalty to a leader, a religion, or even a city or country. Civil behavior includes showing respect for strangers and rests on respect for persons, for property, and for promises. The communes were typically founded by merchants, who had no place in the feudal understanding of social arrangements, and thus created, in effect, their own order alongside that of knights, clerics, and peasants. That order was characterized by the virtues common among merchants: punctuality, respect among trading partners endowed with rights, and as a condition of general flourishing, freedom to purchase or not to purchase—that is, freedom of contract.

As the new cities were primarily places of trade and commerce, freedom was a central value. In Henri Pirenne's (1937, 50) words, "Without liberty, that is to say, without the power to come and go, to do business, to sell goods, a power not enjoyed by serfdom, trade was impossible." The early civil societies were known as places of freedom, as expressed in the old German slogan "*Stadtluft macht frei*" (city air makes one free), and peace (Pirenne notes, "The burghers were essentially a group of *homines pacis*—men of peace"; Pirenne 1969, 200). Such civil societies were, at least in their founding periods, constituted by rather robust social contracts, often in the form of oaths that were affirmed annually by the citizens in the public square.

Starting in roughly the eleventh century in western parts of Europe, urban life began to reemerge. Many cities were formed, either on the basis of older cities (often the seat of a bishop of the Christian church) or as settlements in entirely new locations. In addition to the orders of peasants, knights, and clergy there was added a new social status: burgher, or citizen. The term *burg* comes from the Germanic languages and refers to a strong or fortified place. (Typically, the new settlements were protected by walls.) In European languages, two terms emerged: *burgenses* and *civitas*. As the German historian Hans Planitz (1954, 100) noted, "The expression *burgenses* was at first used only if the city was not a *civitas*, and *civitas* was at first only the old episcopal seat ('*Bischofsstadt*')." *Burgensis* and *bürgerlich* enter English via French as *bourgeois*. Later the derivatives of the terms—*bürgerlich-bourgeois* and *civil*—came to be used interchangeably. (*Burg* persisted in English in such names as Hillsborough, Pittsburgh, and in the name of the oldest representative assembly in English colonies, the House of Burgesses.)

Rather than distinguishing civil parts of society or a social order from uncivil parts, the term *civil society* distinguished civil societies from other forms of human association, such as relationships based on slavery or feudalism.

The rights of burghers-citizens that made possible such a society came to be known as civil rights; that term in modern American parlance has narrowed in scope to refer the right against discrimination by the state, but that usage

emerged from the demand by black Americans and their supporters for equal rights of citizenship—that is, for equal membership in the civil society.

The political philosopher James Harrington ([1656] 1992) used the term civil society in the seventeenth century to refer to those people governed by a common set of laws, or government, rather than by the arbitrary will of rulers:

Government (to define it *de jure* or according to ancient prudence) is an art whereby a civil society of men is instituted and preserved upon the foundation of common right or interest, or (to follow Aristotle and Livy) it is the empire of laws and not of men. (8)

Thus, the rule of law was considered an important element of civil society from its early usage.

John Locke (1988) used the term interchangeably with political society to refer to a voluntary social order with a common government:

The only way whereby any one divests himself of his Natural Liberty, and *puts on the bonds of Civil Society* is by agreeing with other Men to joyn and unite into a Community, for their comfortable, safe, and peaceable living one amongst another, in a secure Enjoyment of their Properties, and a greater Security against any that are not of it. This any number of Men may do, because it injures not the Freedom of the rest; they are left as they were in the Liberty of the State of Nature. When any number of Men have *so consented to make one Community* or Government, they are thereby presently incorporated, and make *one Body Politick*, wherein the *Majority* have a Right to act and conclude the rest. (330–31)

Locke distinguished the civil or political society from the government that may be delegated powers to act on its behalf; what characterizes being in

civil society, as opposed to a state of nature, is the existence of a common judge among persons who are in civil society with regard to each other; as with the state of nature, civil society for Locke is a relational term. One can be in a condition of the state of nature with regard to some persons, but in civil society with regard to others.

Immanuel Kant (1985), in line with Locke, defined civil society as “the condition of being subject to general external (that is, public) legislation that is backed by power is the civil society” (65).

The term, in its various German, French, and English usages, has been used to refer to the society under a common judge or community, to the organizations within it, and to a wider web of organizations and affiliations and relationships that may extend beyond the borders of any particular state, thus, an international civil society.

The German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1977) added a twist to previous definitions by characterizing civil society in terms of the alleged motivations of the persons within it: thus, “individuals in their capacity as burghers are private persons whose end is their own interest” and civil society (*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*) is “the battleground where everyone’s individual private interest meets everyone else’s” (124, 189). Karl Marx (1964) followed Hegel’s lead in this regard, and in his “On the Jewish Question,” he stated, “The so-called rights of man, as distinct from the rights of the citizen, are simply the rights of a member of civil society, that is, of egoistic man, of man separated from other men and from the community” (24). Thus, businesspeople, traders, merchants, and the like, who are alleged to seek only their own profit, are for both Hegel and Marx the archetypical specimens of civil society.

Some more recent thinkers who have deployed the term, from both the left and the right, have reversed Hegel’s and Marx’s characterization and have distinguished civil society as precisely distinct from for-profit enterprise, as between state and market or as characterizing exclusively nonprofit organizations. The leftist thinkers Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato (1992) characterize civil society as “a sphere of social interaction between economy and state, composed above all of the intimate sphere (especially the family), the sphere of associations (especially voluntary associations),

social movements, and forms of public communication” (ix). The conservative thinker Don Eberly (1996) defines civil society as

an intermediary sector, where private individuals join voluntarily in associations that operate neither on the principle of coercion, nor entirely on the principle of rational self-interest. In fact, the modus operandi of life in civil society gives expression to the pursuit of the common good, where actions are animated by a spirit of trust and collaboration. (30–31)

Such attempts to characterize civil society as neither market nor state, with the market conceived as based exclusively on the pursuit of self-interest and the state conceived as exclusively coercive, run into a variety of logical problems, for coercion can be deployed for self-interested reasons and voluntary exchange can be deployed for charitable reasons. The former is common enough and is usually characterized as corruption or rent-seeking. With regard to the latter, a philanthropist may purchase blankets and medicines in the market and, one would suppose, seeks the lowest prices when doing so to maximize his or her ability to assist those in need. Characterizations or definitions of civil society in terms of nonexclusive categories (not coercive and not selfish) thus run into difficulties; they cannot provide a comprehensive, or perhaps even useful, taxonomy of human interactions.

Thus, when comparing the use of the term civil society across various political ideologies and thinkers, it is wise to pay close attention to how it is being used. It may be used to mean selfish persons, or altruistic persons, or noncoercive and nonselfish persons, and so forth.

A more neutral and descriptive definition was offered by the sociologist Reinhard Bendix (1978), who stipulated simply, “Civil society refers to all institutions in which individuals can pursue common interests without detailed direction or interference from the government” (523). Understood along those lines, civil society can be clearly distinguished from totalitarian societies that seek to encompass the individual entirely within a totalizing state or party ideological identity. It also distinguishes civil society from

older forms of interaction based on slavery, serfdom, or other forms of domination. Civil societies allow for individuals to form both complex social relationships and through them, complex personal identities. Communal identities, as promoted by various communitarian philosophies, tend to see the individual's identity as entirely circumscribed by the borders of the relevant group, whether religious, ethnic, racial, linguistic, or other. In civil societies, in which individuals enjoy the civil rights of freedom of association and contract, each individual can construct an identity that is unique.

The sociologist Georg Simmel (1972) characterized the relationship between the individual and groups as follows:

The groups with which the individual is affiliated constitute a system of coordinates, as it were, such that each new group with which he becomes affiliated circumscribes him more exactly and more unambiguously. To belong to any one of these groups leaves the individual considerable leeway. But the larger number of groups to which an individual belongs, the more improbable it is that other persons will exhibit the same combination of group-affiliations, that these particular groups will “intersect” once again [in a second individual]. (150)

Simmel suggested that the relationships of person and groups in civil society could be characterized, not in terms of concentric circles, as communitarians suggest, but in terms of infinitely complex sets of intersecting circles. Drawing on a comparison between modular furniture, which one can buy in increments and construct unique, but complementary, arrangements for one's home or office, Ernest Gellner (1994) identified civil society with the ability to create unique identities: “What genuine Civil Society really requires is not modular furniture, but modular man” (97).

Role complexity and individuality are thus central features of civil society. Increasingly, as interactions among humans cross and cross again a multitude of borders and boundaries, civil society is increasingly capable of being distinguished from the political society with which Locke associated

it, that is, with membership in a particular political community governed by the rule of the majority. A Korean and a Kenyan may interact regularly on the basis of commonly understood rules of behavior, although they do not, as Locke stipulated, “make one Community or Government.” Their relationship, whether commercial, religious, or social, fits Bendix’s (1978) definition of civil society as characterizing “all institutions in which individuals can pursue common interests without detailed direction or interference from the government” (523). The institutions through which they pursue common interests are increasingly, in the modern era, detached from particular nation states or political societies and governed by either multigovernmental units of governance or systems of law and adjudication that are quite independent of governments.

International civil society offers far greater scope for role complexity and complex forms of identity than were available in the past, as individuals are now able to interact in ways unimaginable to previous generations, through electronic communication, social media, fast international travel, and so on.

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See also [Citizenship](#); [Class](#); [Communitarianism and Liberalism](#); [Community](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Ethnicity and Political Thought](#); [Hegel](#), [Georg Wilhelm Friedrich](#); [Kant](#), [Immanuel](#); [Locke](#), [John](#); [Marx](#), [Karl](#); [Modernization](#); [Rights, Civil](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Rule of Law](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Totalitarianism](#); [United Nations](#), [Theories of the](#)

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Class

Class

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Class

The concept of class distinguishes groups within a population. It is important to recognize that differing conceptions of class do so in disparate ways. As it takes shape as an issue in eighteenth-century political thought, class cuts society along the lines of economic function—focusing, for instance, upon landowners and merchants as economically distinct groups. It was commonly argued that members of a class shared interests that differed from, and might conflict with, those of other classes. The implications, however, for interests of class as position within the economic order were disputed. In understanding the place of class in political thought since 1750, it is essential to grasp that the questions of how best to define class and to understand its operation, were often inextricably bound up with broader debates so that variously and importantly contrasting conceptions of class were mobilized in support of divergent visions of politics.

Accounts of class as a description of society could differ in a variety of ways. When and why did separate economic roles give rise to classes? What was the relationship between economic activity and social being? Should class be expected to determine political behavior? Was class an enduring and self-replicating feature of society? Shared descriptions of society do not entail normative consensus about politics: agreement about the existence of classes does not preclude sharp conflict over political ends generated by, for instance, contrasting assessments of the value of equality. Particular understandings of class could, though, have radical consequences for the status of political thought. A determinist conception of class in

which economic structures were taken to shape ideas undercuts the notion of political thought as an independent intellectual project.

Perhaps the most familiar understanding of class is one in which the linkages between the economic, the social, and the political are very tight and in which the direction of causation is seen as running from the first through to the last. This understanding, however, needs to be placed alongside approaches that present the linkages as much looser and in which causation is not one directional. Within the former, the fit between objective accounts of social structure and subjective perceptions of social life and the self is held to be very close; within the latter, the gap between structures and perceptions can be extensive. Indeed, class can be seen as a widespread and important identity to which individuals cleave while explaining its incidence in primarily cultural terms. Whereas, however, proponents of a strongly material conception of class have often (though not always) presented it as the master key to understanding society, analysts of class as an identity less shackled to economic structures have been more likely to see it as one among a variety of aspects of selfhood (e.g., gender, ethnicity, religion) and to place less explanatory store by it.

What is the significance of class for thinking about politics? Why has it mattered for political thought since the mid-eighteenth century? One common answer has been to argue that class-as-economic-position produces persistent inequalities of social and political power that are unjust and unacceptable. There are, however, other answers. The consolidation of distinct economic classes was seen by some early opponents of commercial society as a source of political instability, whereas its defenders countered that the interdependences created by the developing division of labor actually reduced political conflict. Civic republican critics argued that the separation of classes in commercial society weakened attachment to the common good and discouraged the participatory virtues of citizenship. Romantic critics argued the growth of classes imprisoned the self within the fetters of commercialism and shattered the bonds that should integrate individuals within an organic social whole. Normative objections to the consequences of class were not confined to claims about distributive injustice; the damaging impact of class on the psychological health of the polity was a recurrent theme. Proponents of commercial society were

generally less troubled by sharpening social cleavages. This acceptance might be because market outcomes were seen as inherently just, either because the ensuing allocation of goods was viewed as meritocratic or because free exchange between individuals was taken to be a just process in which no one was harmed. It was, however, often that growing class inequalities were seen rather as a price worth paying for the unique capacity of commercial society to secure basic needs for all. It is thus apparent that the implications of class for normative political thought have historically been interpreted in a variety of ways.

Commercial Society, Class, and the French Revolution

In the mid-eighteenth century, class as a socioeconomic phenomenon emerged as a subject of political thought in the interconnected debates about commercial society in Britain and France. In both countries, commentators debated the merits of a changing society in which commerce, manufacture, and towns were growing in significance relative to agriculture and the countryside. Within these discussions, class as economic role loomed large as rival views were developed of the political implications of the increasing division of labor. The debates were complex, embracing a range of questions, not least over the nature and desirability of economic growth. In France, from mid century, the physiocrats were associated with the argument that the interests of agriculture were to be privileged over those of manufacture, though the second generation of physiocrats that included Robert Jacques Turgot actually held a more nuanced view. In Britain, writers indebted to republican modes of thinking feared that the distinct roles occupied by different classes in commercial society drastically curtailed the independence required for the exercise of political virtue and with it, the prospects for free governments. Adam Smith shared some of their concerns about the impact of commercial society upon the more martial virtues but argued that for all their inequalities, dynamic commercial societies were able to secure the material needs of their members in a way that previous kinds of society could not. In Germany, antagonism toward the advent of commercial society was more pronounced than in Britain or France. As in Britain and France, though, class was

emerging as an important topic in political thought. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's analysis of the character of civil society owed much to Smith's political economy. For Hegel, civil society was shaped by the particularities of class. It was through politics and the state that universality was to be obtained, though civil society was to endure as a field for the assertion of particular interests. The novelties of political economy and the specter of commercial society directed the attention of European political thinkers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to the implications of class.

Debate about class was deeply affected by the major political event of the period: the French Revolution. The Revolution raised profound questions about the relationship between social and political change. Differing explanations of its origins and course offered contrasting interpretations of the link between class and politics, but in this respect as in others, the Revolution had large consequences for thinking about politics. French liberals in the 1820s, such as François Guizot, sought to understand why British and French politics had diverged so dramatically, and class emerged as a crucial element of their explanation. The early growth of royal power in Britain had encouraged an alliance between the aristocracy and the rising middle class that limited the monarchy, whereas in France the strength of the feudal nobility produced a combination of the crown and the bourgeoisie that led to sharp social tensions and a pronounced centralization of state power. French debates tended to attribute greater independent importance to culture than was evident in the conjectural histories of the Scottish Enlightenment with their strong focus upon the determining force of the mode of subsistence. Nonetheless, in their attempts to explain the peculiarities of French history, writers such as Guizot and later Alexis de Tocqueville, produced powerful accounts of the relationship between social change and political development in which class relations shaped the possibilities for political action and which had a significant legacy for political thought.

Karl Marx, Socialism, and Max Weber

By far the best-known account of class in the nineteenth century is that of Karl Marx. Indeed, the history of class in political thought is sometimes

treated as though it were interchangeable with the history of Marxism. This treatment is, as we have seen, misleading, since it neglects earlier debates and omits the significance of class in much non-Marxist political thought. We obviously need, though, to assess the place of class both in Marx's own thinking and within subsequent Marxist traditions whose relationship to the historical Marx could be fairly attenuated. Marx's work has attracted an immense amount of commentary and generated a corresponding quantity of controversy. It is, though, possible to detect some important commonalities in the literature on Marx. First, there has been an increasing effort to locate Marx more precisely in his nineteenth-century context rather than to read his work through the prism of subsequent events and interpretations. This effort has led in particular to a renewed focus upon Marx's debt to, and relationship with, Hegel and Hegelianism. Second, and relatedly, much writing has stressed the differences between Marx and Friedrich Engels and to argue that it is the latter, notably in his *Anti-Dühring*, who was primarily responsible for popularizing a scientific, law-like version of Marxism, shorn of the more philosophical and Hegelian tendencies of Marx's own thought. Third, many commentators have come, albeit for different interpretive purposes, to insist upon fundamental continuities between the early and the late Marx. Disagreement, however, persists, not least over Marx's portrayal of the relationship between economics and politics and more generally, about the place of the political in his work.

The idea of class conflict is at the heart of human history in the *Communist Manifesto* (1848). This theme was not its first manifestation in Marx's work, and others were writing about it at the time. The *Manifesto*, however, placed class at the center of both its economic analysis and its political prescription, identifying the role of the bourgeoisie in creating the contemporary world and that of the proletariat—as a universal class—in establishing the communist future. Conflict between classes is deeply concerned with property relations: a world without class conflict will be a world without private property. The *Manifesto* supplies a fairly stark view of class; elsewhere, Marx offered more complex accounts of class structure, of the relationship between economic position and social consciousness, and of the class basis of the state. Some see Marx's use of class as a determinist form of antipolitics in which the emergence of both abundance and the proletariat creates the conditions for the transcendence of the state.

For such critics, the way Marx employs class helps explain his failings as a theorist of politics. Others, though, regard Marx's approach to class as less determinist and view his reluctance to supply blueprints for future politics as a reflection of his progressive understanding of human development.

The subsequent consolidation of Marxism in the later nineteenth century owed a great deal to Engels and tended to project its tenets as an allegedly scientific creed. In these years, Marxist orthodoxy, as forcefully set out by Karl Kautsky, insisted upon the determining power of economics, the relative immiseration of the proletariat, and the inevitability of class polarization and conflict. The heyday of classical Marxism in Western Europe was, however, relatively brief. By the interwar period, writers such as György Lukács and particularly Antonio Gramsci, were attributing a role to culture and ideas in explaining patterns of subordination that breached the formulations of late nineteenth-century classical Marxism. Late nineteenth-century Marxism was not itself monolithic. The controversy over revisionism, especially associated with the work of Edouard Bernstein (1961), elicited a lively debate over the class structure of contemporary capitalist societies. Late nineteenth-century socialism more broadly contained alternative articulations of the significance of class. British Fabians concluded that socialism was evolving peacefully out of existing capitalism and argued that differential productiveness, among humans and natural resources, militated against a static state-less future in which plenty eliminated all questions of distributional justice. For such evolutionary socialists the proletariat was not a universal class, class conflict was not an obligatory prelude to the establishment of socialism, and no end point to social change could be foreseen.

Socialism, and Marx's thought in particular, was a significant context for the enduringly important work of Max Weber. Like Marx, Weber has been the subject of countless studies, and his writings continue to provoke disagreement. Again, like Marx, much of what he wrote was incomplete, or occasional. His status as a founding father of sociology has not always aided recovery of the character of his work in its historical context. Weber sought to understand the nature of modernity, emphasizing the scale, complexity, and power of the contemporary state, especially in large countries such as Germany. His writings combined a serious interest in

political economy, evident in his concern with the growth of trusts, with an acute sensitivity to the changing conduct, manners, and psychology of modern life. His thinking about class embodied these larger concerns, not least his desire to comprehend the character and distribution of power. Class positions were a result of relative market power. The economic basis of class altered over time as different markets (credit, commodity, labor) assumed primacy. Class situations could be the basis for collective action, but Weber argued status groups, in which similar patterns of consumption underpinned a shared life style, were more likely to constitute communities.

Weber was concerned to defend the autonomy and importance of the political, rejecting both the reduction of politics to economic interests and the elevation of subjective impulses into political creeds. Any serious reckoning with political reality had to recognize the inexorable growth of bureaucratic rationality and to confront the implications of the state's monopoly on the legitimate use of violence. Insisting on the inescapable conflict between cherished values, Weber offered a stark picture of demands of modern political life upon one who sought to combine conviction and responsibility.

Class, Social Justice, and Egalitarianism

In some respects, the story of class in twentieth century Western European political thought is more straightforward than that for earlier periods. The concern of many nineteenth- and early twentieth-century commentators with the psychological consequences of class divisions and with preserving the qualities of the good citizen, arguably becomes less central, while questions about distributive justice become increasingly prominent. Within Marxist debates in Western Europe, alienation certainly emerged as an important theme, encouraged by the rediscovery of some of Marx's early work, and by a broader growth of interest in Hegel, notably in France. Analyses of the ways in which capitalism and advanced industrialism led to a loss of self echoed earlier concerns with the psychological and moral consequences of commercial society. Both production and consumption within capitalist class society could be seen as sources of estrangement, with the deadening routines of factory life in the former matched by the illusory fascinations of the commodity in the latter. Among the British New

Left thinkers of the 1950s and 1960s, such as E. P. Thompson, elements of the romantic critique of commercial and industrial society recurred.

While discussion of class within Western European political thought was multifaceted throughout the twentieth century, controversies over equality and social justice loomed large. Egalitarianism played a central part in political thought on the broad left, including socialists and progressives. Within this tradition, class was regarded as the key form of inequality in contemporary society because of its structural, self-reproducing character. The chief task of politics was to address this. Much debate was generated over how best to do this: to what extent could a redistributive welfare state mitigate class inequality, or was state control over large parts of economic life required? Did the provision of equality of opportunity—a widely shared ideal across many countries for much of the century—require strict equality of outcomes, or at least a very substantial reduction in distributive inequality? It was commonly argued among progressives that inherited class position powerfully shaped life chances and hence that genuine equality of opportunity was impossible in a highly stratified class society.

Currents of political thought in which equality occupied a much less significant place tended to view these issues rather differently. Champions of liberty as the foremost political value—especially those who understood liberty as the absence of interference—worried less about equality, and consequently class. The extent to which class in the sense of inherited economic circumstances affected life chances was often disputed by libertarians of various hues, but the more fundamental divergence was over the meaning, significance, and relation of freedom and equality as political values. These kinds of disputes often lacked the rich attention to social and political realities evident in earlier debates.

Within Anglophone political thought, the currency of utilitarianism, along with techniques borrowed from economics, encouraged a focus on maximizing welfare that often discerned trade-offs between inequality and productivity. Utilitarianism has taken a variety of forms and ever since John Stuart Mill has often been importantly combined with other approaches, but it tended to foster a focus on the welfare of individuals that did not

incorporate the interest in groups and the relationships between them that had motivated much writing about class among political thinkers.

The ascendancy of utilitarianism was taken by John Rawls as a point of departure in his work on justice that is often regarded as rejuvenating Anglophone political thought. The egalitarian liberalism with which Rawls is associated was sensitive to resource inequalities. It has, however, perhaps been less concerned to offer the sort of detailed social and political analysis of existing institutions central to political thinkers for whom class was a key category. Within the Anglophone political theory boom initiated by the work of Rawls, there emerged a school of analytical Marxists, such as John Roemer and G. A. Cohen, for whom a structural understanding of class was a central aspect of their thought. Such writers refocused attention upon the ethical exploitation they took to characterize societies in which ownership of the means of production was unequal.

Analytical Marxists defended a fairly traditional, even deterministic, conception of class. However, within Western European political thought more generally, the last thirty years have witnessed a growing emphasis upon the diverse sources of the self and upon the constitutive role of language, culture, and history in shaping the self. It can be argued that this is apparent in the political thought of sociologists who retain an interest in both class and classical sociology, such as Anthony Giddens and W. G. Runciman. It is, though, more evident in the communitarian response to egalitarian liberalism, which was profoundly concerned with the collective identities but for whom class was usually merely one such identity and whose interests were often more directed to other identities, such as those of religion or ethnicity.

The diversity and complexity of contemporary political thought elude simple summary, but it would not be right to suggest that class has disappeared as a subject. It might, though, be suggested that the formal character of much recent political philosophy can lead to a relative lack of attention to the social and institutional constraints within which politics occurs and that were of great concern to earlier political thinkers for whom class was a crucial means of understanding those constraining realities. For much of the period from 1750, the implications of class for political thought

were of intense interest. This interest emerged in the eighteenth century as part of the attempt to comprehend commercial society and endured, registering across the political spectrum. Marx's and Weber's contrasting approaches to class have proven enduringly important, but class was a subject of much wider concern in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century political thought, and this larger debate in turn provides the crucial context for their seminal work.

James Thompson

See also [Alienation](#); [Bernstein, Eduard](#); [Civil Society](#); [Communitarianism and Liberalism](#); [Community](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Equality and Egalitarianism](#); [Ethnicity and Political Thought](#); [Fabianism](#); [French Revolution, Political Thought of the](#); [Gramsci, Antonio](#); [Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich](#); [Kautsky, Karl](#); [Liberalism](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Lukács, György](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Mill, John Stuart](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Political Sociology](#); [Rawls, John](#); [Russian Revolution, Political Thought of the](#); [Smith, Adam](#); [Socialism](#); [Tocqueville, Alexis de](#); [Utilitarianism](#); [Weber, Max](#)

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Richard Cobden (1804–65) was an English manufacturer, radical politician, and a leading political figure in nineteenth-century Britain. From an impoverished farming family, Cobden served a commercial apprenticeship as a clerk and commercial traveler in London before becoming a partner in a calico-printing business near Burnley, Lancashire, in 1828. Cobden's formal schooling ended at the age of fifteen, but he read widely during early adulthood, and tours of Europe, the Ottoman Empire, and the United States broadened his historical and political knowledge and his intellectual horizons. Underpinning Cobden's political philosophy was an ardent belief in Adam Smith's free-market capitalist political economy, but Cobden integrated laissez-faire economics into a broader system of thought, with the aim of promoting international peace and commercial development.

Cobden first came to public prominence as the author of two pamphlets, *England, Ireland, and America* ([1835] 2005) and *Russia* (1836) under the pseudonym "A Manchester Manufacturer." Cobden criticized the morality of British foreign policy and ridiculed Britain's obsession with maintaining the European balance of power. He called for an end to wasteful British military expenditure and damaging political and diplomatic alliances and advocated a liberal commercial policy of free trade that would foster economic development, promote British exports, and encourage international commercial exchange. This highly articulate and cogent program, with the interlinking components of free trade, reduced military

expenditure, and a noninterventionist foreign policy, remained central to Cobden's political thought throughout his life.

With the formation of the Anti-Corn-Law League in 1838, predominantly by urban industrialists and manufacturers, Cobden embarked on a new front of political activity. The Corn Laws were laws that by levying protective tariffs on foreign grain imports, raised bread prices for British consumers while protecting British farmers and landowners. As a speaker and writer, Cobden played an important role in the movement, which successfully achieved its aims with the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846. Along with other manufacturers Cobden was accused of seeking repeal as a means of enabling manufacturers to reduce the wages of workers, but it seems unlikely that this was his prime motivation.

Cobden believed commerce should not be subject to any artificial impediments like tariffs, and in 1846 to 1847 he toured Europe, hoping to promote a wider acceptance of free-trade doctrines. As he viewed political and economic progress in terms of the harmonious economic development of nations, Cobden tied the promotion of free trade to a reduction of armaments. In his view, commerce was a civilizing and pacific influence. As free trade forged closer international commercial links, the aggressive instincts of men and nations would decline, and as the prospect of wealth arising from productive employment and manufacturing increased, the likelihood of war would diminish. Cobden therefore called for cuts in military expenditure while promoting international disarmament and arbitration as ways of curbing militarism and eradicating war. In this activity Cobden cooperated with peace societies and Quakers, and contributed toward an influential pacifist strain of thought in liberal politics.

Ultimately, Cobden's aim was the establishment of a new, peaceful form of international relations based on commercial and industrial activity rather than diplomatic and military alliances and rivalries. However, in the 1850s this vision was continually undermined by British colonial wars and territorial expansion in India and China. In Europe, the Crimean War (1854–56) pitting Britain, France, and the Ottoman Empire against Russia, unleashed a wave of British patriotic fervor. Cobden's opposition to the war was unpopular, and he lost his parliamentary seat in 1857. He returned to

political prominence in 1860 when, acting for the British government, he negotiated an Anglo-French commercial treaty, which by a mutual reduction of tariffs defused the threat of war. By doing so, the treaty validated Cobden's belief in commerce as a force for international peace.

In his later years, Cobden increasingly focused on reductions in government expenditure and nonintervention in foreign policy, issues that had first propelled him into political life. Although sympathetic to the North during the American Civil War, Cobden persistently urged British neutrality, and he continued to oppose what he regarded as the increasing militarization of British society. During his lifetime, Cobden was considered a leading figure of the advanced radicals within the Liberal Party, and after his death his ideas remained influential, especially under the Liberal governments of William Gladstone, and on the thought of John Hobson, among others. The emergence of socialism and collectivist politics in the twentieth century led to a decline in Cobden's direct influence, but many of his ideas, especially those relating to the conduct of an ethical foreign policy, retain contemporary relevance for policy makers throughout the world, and he remains a much-respected figure.

Gordon Bannerman

See also [Capitalism](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Empire and Political Thought](#); [Globalization](#); [Hobson, John Atkinson](#); [Liberalism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Pacifism](#); [Smith, Adam](#); [Spencer, Herbert](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [United Nations, Theories of the](#); [War and Political Thought](#)

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Samuel Taylor Coleridge was born in Ottery St Mary, Devonshire, in 1772 and died in Highgate, near London, in 1834. He was educated at Christ's Hospital (then situated in London) and at Jesus College, Cambridge. Except for a brief period when he served in the British administration in Malta, he lived on the meager fruits of his writings, an annuity from the Wedgewood family, and the generosity of his friends. Although known primarily as a poet, Coleridge produced a significant body of political journalism, numerous political pamphlets, and a significant philosophical study of British government, *On the Constitution of Church and State* (1829).

Coleridge's earliest political writings, published in the mid-1790s, reflect contemporary preoccupations with the implications of recent revolutionary events in France and more widespread impulses of moral and social transformation associated with radical strands in dissenting Protestantism. Scholarly opinion is divided on the depth of Coleridge's political radicalism at this time. There is, however, little doubt that his identification with radical dissent, his opposition to the war with France, and his rejection of the slave trade aligned him with those who were seen by an increasingly nervous and assertive governing elite as a threat to the prevailing order.

Over the next three decades, Coleridge became a sharp critic of revolutionary and Napoleonic France and increasingly emphasized the moral significance of private property and traditional structures of ecclesiastical and political authority. In *The Friend* (1809), he argued that

political rights and institutions must be considered in relation to the historical experience of particular communities, a requirement that meant that in the unequal societies of contemporary Europe political power would reside largely in the hands of property holders. The dangers of ignoring these principles had been amply demonstrated in the recent history of France: abstract claims to political rights had destroyed the fabric of French society, exposing the entire population to the tyranny of those whose domination of the state rested on naked force. A recognition of the necessity for political inequality did not, however, undermine the fundamental equality of humanity; rather, it meant that those who wielded political power had an obligation not just to protect members of the community but to maintain conditions that made it possible for them to flourish as moral beings. This requirement played a key role in Coleridge's later writings, providing the basis of his critique of the science of political economy. In the second "Lay Sermon" of 1817, he identified its depiction of market forces with a mechanical perspective that dehumanized social relationships, effectively denied the moral personality of the working classes, and absolved both new and traditional elites of responsibility for their well-being. In response to this state of affairs, Coleridge stressed the need for institutional structures capable of sustaining moral and educational influences that addressed a comprehensive conception of human flourishing.

In *On the Constitution of Church and State*, Coleridge applied this requirement to British government. In so far as the venerated constitution in church and state corresponded to its "idea" or ultimate end, it provided a means of balancing the progressive forces of commercial wealth with the conserving tendencies of landed property. But while identifying a rationale for parliamentary government by reference to the generally beneficial interaction of different forms of personal property, Coleridge insisted on these forces being counterbalanced by an established church, whose members (the clerisy) were endowed with nonpersonal resources (the nationality) dedicated to these purposes. The clerisy was responsible for the education and moral guidance of the ordinary people and for acting on property holders so as to mitigate the tendencies to selfishness that were always attendant on private property and were heightened in communities undergoing rapid economic development.

Coleridge's political writings are significant in relation to the romantic critique of political economy that was a feature of nineteenth-century British political thought and to a sometimes-related search for intellectual and cultural influences that might be brought to bear on politics and economy in the interests of humanitarian ideals. Later writers, including Thomas Carlyle, Matthew Arnold, and John Stuart Mill, advanced claims about the role of intellectuals that were related to Coleridge's account of the clerisy. The fact that Coleridge managed to present an image of the Church of England as an established church that was not heavily encumbered by either Anglican dogma or by identification with the interests of secular elites, gave the idea of the clerisy and other aspects of his mature political thought a critical edge that was lacking in the work of other admirers of the traditional constitution in church and state.

John Morrow

See also [Carlyle, Thomas](#); [Conservatism](#); [French Revolution](#); [Political Thought of the](#); [Mill, John Stuart](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Radicalism](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Romanticism](#)

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The philosophy of R. G. (Robin George) Collingwood (1889–1943) is at its best stimulating in argument and elegant in expression. It is also frequently subtle in analysis and can be radical in its claims. A polymath by temperament and education, Collingwood was disturbed by the intellectual narrowness and pedantry that he saw as the defining features of twentieth-century thought. It is not surprising that Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and John Ruskin, the main influences on his outlook on life, took as he did the unity of thought and action as their guiding ideal. Specific influences on his political thought include Thomas Hill Green and the Italian political philosopher Guido de Ruggiero, whose work Collingwood translated and admired.

Collingwood's reputation in philosophy rests largely on his philosophy of history and his aesthetics. His arguments defending history as a body of autonomous knowledge and his view that art is a form of expression are both grounded in practical experience. So a theory of human activity must start from practice, its aim being to reveal the criterion implicit in each of the different ways through which we understand the world and act in it. *Speculum Mentis* (1924) shows this procedure in action. The business of philosophy is to exhibit the logic immanent in human experience. Art, religion, science, history, and philosophy, together with their associated modes of activity, are both distinct and hierarchically related. While not a work of political thought, *Speculum Mentis* anticipates many of Collingwood's later and characteristic political ideas. Overall, it was a call

to order after the upheavals of World War I, warning against the neglect of philosophy and history by pointing to the dangers of approaching the world entirely from the standpoint of natural science. That Collingwood saw a connection between the uncritical application of natural science and the military stalemate on the western front during World War I is clear from his *An Autobiography* (1939), which also reflects his despair at the decline of liberalism as a form of practical politics and as a humane philosophy of civilization and culture. *Speculum Mentis* announces Collingwood's aim of restating the principles of a liberal way of life for a society that is increasingly losing its faith in them.

Economics and politics as branches of human experience distinct from morality and religion are systematically elucidated throughout the 1920s in articles such as "Economics as a Philosophical Science" (1925) and "Political Action" (1928). Here, economics, politics, and morality are distinguished in terms of utility, order, and duty, and politics is the realm of order based not on a command theory of political obligation but on membership of a community in which freedom and authority are reconciled. Collingwood's writings on economics have a similar aim, reflecting his belief that economics, like all human activities, has its own rationale. Yet he locates the boundaries of the state in relation to the market not in market forces alone or by a doctrinaire socialism but by a concept of civility that in *The New Leviathan* (1942) he makes the mainspring of his idea of political society.

Collingwood was a liberal political philosopher at a time when liberalism as a set of practical political ideas was in retreat. This retreat gave him the impetus to postulate a new basis for liberalism that drew on his innovative approach to philosophical method and history. Rejecting utilitarianism and social contract as complete accounts of politics, Collingwood developed a philosophy of politics grounded in human consciousness: politics is not a self-sufficient activity, but is continually looking beyond itself to the Christian ideals of civilization for replenishment and support. So through political education and the artifices of democratic rule, barbarism can be mitigated, if not entirely avoided.

The reconciliation of philosophy, history, and politics was Collingwood's overall ambition. Toward the end of his life, illness forced him to give up his work on history to write *The New Leviathan*, his attempt to bring Thomas Hobbes up to date and his major work in political philosophy. The impact of Collingwood's work on the history of political thought has been considerable. Key doctrines in his philosophy of history have lent support to the idea that political texts cannot provide answers to timeless questions but are best read in their historical context and in the light of their intellectual assumptions. For political philosophers wary of justice as an organizing political ideal Collingwood's stress on civility provides a welcome note of caution, although for contemporary liberals who prefer their ideal of social justice undiluted Collingwood's liberalism remains firmly of its time.

Peter Johnson

See also [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Green, Thomas Hill](#); [Hegelianism](#); [Liberalism](#); [Methodology of Political Thought](#); [Obedience, Political](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Ruskin, John](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Communism, Varieties of

Communism is an economic, moral, social, and cultural doctrine centered on the accomplishment of radical transformative ends. With its universalistic goals, eschatological promises, and totalizing ambitions, it has often been described as a political or secular religion. The ultimate purpose of communism is to create a new civilization founded upon a New Man (by which Marx and early followers did not mean only males). Two factors were fundamental for this doctrine: the privileged role of the Party and the revolutionary transformation of human nature. Communism advanced a new conception about human existence (society, economy, social and individual psychology, art). According to it, building the New Man was the supreme finality of political action. Communism's ambition has been to transcend traditional morality, yet it has suffered from moral relativism. It assigned to the party-state its own morality, granting only to it the right to define the meaning and ultimate aim of human existence. The state became the supreme and absolute value within the framework of an eschatological doctrine of revolution. Through the cult of absolute unity along the path to salvation by knowledge of history, communism produced a new, total social and political project centered on purifying the body of the communities that fell under its ideological spell. Its revolutionary project was total and totalizing. As a potent political myth, communism promised immanent deliverance, the chance to achieve prosperity, freedom, and equality. In fact, throughout the twentieth century, the communist

Weltanschauung became the foundation for ideologically based totalitarian political experiments that resulted in terrible human costs.

Origins with Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels

Communism as a global modern revolutionary doctrine, in fact a political religion, was founded by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Marxism was first and foremost a demiurgic attempt to get rid of an abhorred bourgeois order based on market relations (private property), to overcome its reified social relations, and to organize revolutionary social forces for the ultimate confrontation that would result into the “leap from the kingdom of necessity into the kingdom of freedom.” Marx strongly distinguished his revolutionary thought from other versions of socialism (Christian, reactionary-feudal, petty-bourgeois, critical-utopian). Marx’s ambitious radical vision was linked to his firm belief, especially after 1845, that he was in possession of true and correct knowledge (the postulate of epistemic infallibility), considering that his *weltanschauung* was essentially scientific—that is, nonutopian. For Marx, the conviction that history was governed by laws meant that once these laws were grasped, reason (thought) and revolution (action) could coincide in the global proletarian liberating upheaval.

One of the essential texts of this doctrine was *The Communist Manifesto*, published in February 1848. It stated that the proletariat was the chosen class of history, the long-expected redeemer that would restore the lost unity of the human species (*Gattungswesen*). Its fundamental thesis was the centrality of class struggle (historical violence) in the development of society. For Marx (and later for twentieth-century Marxist philosophers Antonio Gramsci and György Lukàcs), the revolutionary class symbolized the viewpoint of totality, thereby creating the epistemic premises for acceding historical truth. In the name of proletarian (authentic) democracy, formal liberties could be suspended, even suppressed. Marx’s myth of the Messiah-class, the heart of communism, nurtured a revolutionary project imbued with a sense of prophetic mission and charismatic-heroic predestination. Marx gave an ultimate apocalyptic verdict: since the bourgeoisie is guilty of the barbarous distortion of human life, it deserved

its fate. The proletariat was historically and morally bound to be its gravedigger.

Marx viewed the social universe primarily (but not only) in terms of social and economic determinism. Freedom meant for Marx and his disciples “understood necessity”—that is, efforts to carry out the presumed goals of history. All human reality was subordinated to the dialectical laws of development, and history was projected into a sovereign entity, whose diktat was beyond any human questioning. He declared his social theory the ultimate scientific formula. Not to recognize its validity was, for Marx, as for his communist successors, evidence of historical blindness, ideological bias, or false consciousness. At the opposite pole, the proletarian viewpoint, celebrated by Marx and crystallized in the form of historical materialism, was thought to provide ultimate knowledge and the recipe for universal happiness.

The ingredient that allowed the realization of the revolutionary mission was revolutionary class consciousness. Through it, humankind’s prehistory would end, and thus, its real history could begin. For Marx, class consciousness was an organic result of the political and ideological development of the proletariat. According to Engels (2013), for example, “The German proletariat was the heir of classical German philosophy.” Young Marx believed that there was a dialectical relationship, and therefore mutually binding, between the critique of weapons and the weapon of the critique in the process of overcoming of philosophy—*Aufhebung*. The revolutionary intellectuals were those who created the doctrine, but the proletarians were not perceived as an amorphous mass toward which a self-appointed group of teachers had the duty of injecting the consciousness of the historical truth. Nevertheless, Marx’s (1978, 143) eleventh “Thesis on Feuerbach” best expressed the novel transformational ethos of communism: “The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways, the point, however, is to *change* it.” Marxian thought consecrated a capacious vision of historical development: with the rubble of the past cleared away, the chosen agent of history would point the way to a new society that would bring about the complete fulfillment of the human spirit.

Marxism perceived itself as science not ethics, and therefore, the revolution it preached about was “part of a historical mechanism: hence, purged of values” (Weber 1974, 23). This prophetic claim led to fanatic, almost mystical belief on the part of its followers, those who embraced the apocalyptic and chiliastic vision of communism’s algebra of revolution. Thus, communism was simultaneously an eschatology (a doctrine of mundane salvation) and an ecclesiology (a ideology of the revolutionary party/movement). Reality as it stood was irreparably reified and it was to be superseded, on the one hand, by the emancipation and revolution of the proletariat, and on the other hand, by the utopia of the classless society. Subsequently, communism’s vision of the future society relied upon a dictatorship over needs. It presupposed the dissolution of the autonomous individual within the all-devouring framework of total control, the disastrous politicization of the psyche, the manipulation of the subjective field, the attempted obliteration of the private sphere as an ultimate sanctuary of the ego. Communism aimed not only at the domination of the body politic, but also over the biological stock of society. It was a total experiment of social engineering. Once it constructed its vision of modernity on the principle of a chosen, socially homogenized community crossing the desert of history from darkness into light, there could be only one solution for those who failed to qualify to their inclusionary criteria: stigmatization, elimination, and most extremely, extermination.

The Marxist eschatology was a form of rationalized theodicy: God was replaced by history, or indeed History. History had only one direction as it unfolded from limited to absolute freedom. Freedom, in its turn, was understood as overcoming necessity. The kingdom of necessity was the realm where economy could not ensure full equality among human beings, where the political was dependent on partisan interests, and the social was atomized. In contrast, the kingdom of freedom was the realm where there was an identity between existence and essence. In this context, human existence could fully reach its development, and the condition for the freedom of all lay in each individual’s liberation. At the basis of communism, therefore, lay a teleological fundamentalism. The final station of it was the City of God on earth—that is, the triumph of the proletariat.

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin Develops a Party-Focused Communism

The main difficulty with the Marxian project was its lack of sensitivity to the psychological makeup of mankind. With its cult of totality, Marxian social theory, which purported to be the ultimate explanatory archetype, set the stage for its degeneration, in Bolshevik (Leninist) translation, into dogma and the ruthless persecution of the heretics. Marx's emphasis on human emancipation as the conscious absorption of society by the individual, his equation of social antagonisms with class conflict resulted in an advocacy of the elimination of intermediaries (laws, institutions, etc.) regulating the relationship between civil society and the state. Marx failed to give instructions on the achievement of social unity. The utopian, eschatological vision of Marx's body of political thought was translated into a revolutionary program of action by Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (born Ulianov). Such discrepancy left the field open for Lenin's creative understanding of necessity that led to the Bolshevik version of man's salvation. In Lenin's vision, the monolithic vanguard party became the repository of human hope, a tightly knit fraternity of illuminated militants and therefore the true vehicle of human freedom. The combination of Marxism and party-power set the communist body politic on the path to self-purification (permanent purge and socialist offensive).

Lenin was a Russian revolutionary, founder of the Bolshevik Party and of the Soviet Union. He was born in April 1870 to a middle-class family and died in January 1924 as the undisputed party and state leader of the USSR. Under Lenin's guidance, the Bolshevik Party organized the October 1917 revolution against the government of the Russian Empire and established the one-party authoritarian system that came to an end in December 1991. As a teenager, Lenin was deeply affected by the execution of his older brother for his involvement in an anti-Czarist plot and, as a law student, became involved in underground revolutionary activities for which he suffered arrests and deportations. Unhappy with the lack of radicalism among his fellow social democrats, Lenin advocated the need to create a new type of political revolutionary movement. His vision of the new type of party was formulated in the pamphlet *What Is to Be Done* (1902) that

articulated the Leninist concept of revolutionary practice in the twentieth century. Lenin's notion of the party led to the split within Russian social democracy between the moderates (Mensheviks) and radicals (Bolsheviks). Leninism (also called Bolshevism) consists fundamentally of Lenin's theory of the vanguard revolutionary party, the doctrine of proletarian revolution in the age of imperialism, and the emphasis on the dictatorship of the proletariat as the new form of state emerging from the collapse of the old, bourgeois order.

Lenin's endeavors were primarily in the field of revolutionary politics and the construction of a revolutionary organization that would be able to coordinate and direct the efforts of the working class to seize power, smash the old state machine, and build a classless, communist society. From the very outset, the Leninist regime was based on violence and repression against any form of political opposition. These authoritarian features of Leninism were further exacerbated by Joseph Stalin, who transformed the Soviet Union into a totalitarian state. Bolshevik humanism was conditioned only by the success of the cause it was engaged in. The individual's existence maintained its weight in the world insofar as it contributed to the construction of social Utopia. Lenin's understanding of morality was based on a principle formulated by nineteenth-century Russian revolutionary Sergei Nechaev (1960, 365) in his *Catechism of the Revolutionary*: "Everything is moral which assists the triumph of the revolution. Immoral and criminal is everything which stands in his way."

Leninism was therefore based on what T. H. Rigby has called a "goal rationality." It presupposed a radically utilitarian transformist conception of politics ultimately materialized in the divinization of a mythical party-state holding the right of life and death over its subjects.

For Lenin, the fate of the communist revolution predicted by Marx depended on the maturity and political will of the revolutionary party. When Lenin started his political career, social democrats throughout the world were grouped within the Second International. The Marxism of this international association rejected revolutionary means of overthrowing the established order and emphasized the role of evolutionary reforms. Lenin found this approach too moderate. He thought that left to itself, the working

class would never engage in an overall revolutionary upheaval to destroy capitalism. Like Marx, Lenin saw the proletarian revolution as a global phenomenon, but he modified some basic tenets of the Marxist theory. Lenin noticed the passivity of the workers in the advanced industrial countries and explained it as the ability of the bourgeoisie to co-opt the working class within the system. It was therefore important to create a new type of political party that would refuse any form of collusion with the existing dominant forces and would eventually exert exclusive political power. For Lenin, a tightly knit, phalanx-like revolutionary organization, structured almost like a military order, was needed to inject revolutionary consciousness into the proletariat and direct the workers in the revolutionary battles. The Party appeared as the embodiment of historical reason and militants were expected to carry out its orders without any hesitation or reservation. Discipline, secrecy, and rigid hierarchy were essential for such a party especially under conditions of clandestine activities (like those in Russia). The main role of the Party was to awaken the proletarian self-consciousness and instill the revolutionary doctrine (faith) into the dormant proletariat. Instead of relying on the spontaneous development of consciousness in the working class, Leninism saw the Party as a catalytic agent bringing revolutionary knowledge, will, and organization to the exploited masses: “Without a revolutionary theory . . . there can be no revolutionary movement.” It was with Lenin that the mystique of the Party of a new type became a feature of radical politics in the twentieth century. The Party was the historical agent for it encompassed the professional revolutionaries, those who, by reuniting their acting and thinking faculties, regained “the grace of the harmonious original being” (Halfin 2000, 14).

Ideological absolutism, sacralization of the ultimate goal, suspension of critical faculties, and the cult of the party line as the perfect expression of the general will were embedded in the original Bolshevik project. Lenin imposed two fundamental elements on the Bolshevik conception of politics: law as an epiphenomenon of revolutionary morals and the heteronomy of individual action. The annihilation of democracy within the Leninist practice is determined by the nature of the Party as a secular substitute for the unifying totalizing mystique in the political body of the absolute sovereign (the medieval king). In other words, the Leninist model asserts

the integral homogenization of the social space as a political and pragmatic ideal. Ideology cuts across all regime dynamics, “grounding and projecting action, without which governance, violence, and socialization become impossible” (Geyer 2009, 28). Lenin revised the classic Marxist theory regarding the location of the revolutionary center in the advanced capitalist West. In one of his most influential writings, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Lenin argued that a new and final stage of capitalism had emerged in which monopoly replaced competition, the concentration of capital reached its climax, and war between capitalist powers had become inevitable. For Lenin, imperialism was guilty of the unspeakable horrors of the world war. The capitalist world system was bound to break down, but this collapse, Lenin maintained, would first occur at the weakest links of the imperialist chain, in the East rather than in the West. Backward Russia, with its insoluble social and economic contradictions, appeared as the country where the revolution could first triumph. The masses were profoundly dissatisfied with the old order, outraged by the costs of war, and ready to engage in revolutionary upheaval. The Russian bourgeoisie was weak enough not to be able to oppose decisive resistance to the radicalized masses, and the proletariat was developed enough to become class conscious thanks to the selfless activities of the Bolshevik party.

In his work *State and Revolution* written in 1917, a few months before the Bolsheviks came to power, Lenin argued that the militaristic-bureaucratic state machine of the bourgeoisie had to be overthrown and replaced by revolutionary councils (organs of direct, participatory democracy). Later, as the new Soviet state was confronted with starvation, poverty, resistance of the White Guards, and foreign intervention, Lenin developed his theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat by which he understood a political regime in which the centralized authority was exerted by the party-state administrative agencies. The initial drive toward democracy from below and self-empowerment of the masses was replaced by emphasis on the reconstructed state machine that according to Lenin was indispensable for defending the revolution and pursuing its main goals.

True, Lenin saw this as a temporary stage and he never resigned himself to the idea that the Russian Revolution would be not only the first, but the sole proletarian revolution for decades to come.

One of the most acerbic reactions to Lenin's vision of a dictatorship of the proletariat and conception of the monolithic, vanguard party came from the Polish-German Marxist thinker Rosa Luxemburg (1871–1919) in her manuscript notes on the Russian Revolution. She famously commented on the non-negotiable value of freedom: "Freedom only for supporters of the government, only for members of the single party, however numerous—this is not freedom. Freedom must always be for those who think differently" (quoted in Kolakowski 2005, 422). Rosa Luxemburg (1997, 370; emphasis added) anticipated the path taken by the Bolsheviks toward the totalization of power when she wrote that the development of their revolution "moves naturally in an ascending line: from moderate beginnings to ever- greater radicalization of aims and, parallel with that, from a coalition of classes and parties to the *sole rule of the radical party*." This was the origin of the major conflicts between Lenin and Luxemburg and one of the main distinctions between Soviet and Western Marxism. Luxemburg cofounded with German socialists an antiwar organization Spartakusbund (*Spartacus League*), which organized an armed uprising in the aftermath of the German defeat in World War I. The revolt was crushed, and Luxemburg was captured and later executed.

From Stalin to the Fall of Communism

The restoration of state prerogatives was for Lenin a necessary evil, and he tried to justify the notion of a proletarian dictatorship by defining it as the dictatorship of the majority of the population (poor peasants included), and therefore not exactly a dictatorship. In form, Lenin said, this was a dictatorship, but in substance, because it represented the interests and aspirations of the large majority of the population, it was the true, substantive democracy. Later, Stalin would transform every single feature of Lenin's concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat into a dogma to justify his highly repressive and terrorist regime. This transformation was possible because Lenin's concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat was his contempt for the state of law: "The revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat," Lenin wrote in 1918, "is power won and maintained by the violence of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, power that is unrestricted by any laws." Lenin was convinced, however, that these temporary exceptional measures, including persecution of dissidents and banning of all

political parties but the Bolsheviks, were needed for the survival of the revolution in Russia. In the long run, however, he hoped that the revolution would triumph in the West and a certain political and economic relaxation would become possible. His New Economic Policy, inaugurated in 1921, indicated Lenin's readiness to jettison the initial utopian economic vision and allow for a mixed economy (with significant elements of market in addition to state control over industry, foreign trade, and banks). Lenin's last struggle, one that coincided with the dramatic deterioration of his health, opposed the ailing leader to Stalin's growing despotism. In his last writings, Lenin asked for Stalin to be removed from the position of general secretary, but his behest went unheeded by the Bolshevik elite. Stalin was already controlling the party-state apparatus and postured as Lenin's most faithful disciple.

Following Lenin's demise, a fierce struggle took place among Bolshevik leaders. Eventually, by 1929, Stalin triumphed over his opponents and initiated the revolution from above, creating a post-Leninist, truly Stalinist party and an extremely centralized, ideologically driven tyranny. The seeds of Stalin's regime, however, had been sown by Lenin. Indeed, Stalin created no new institution and added no significant chapter to Leninism. He carried to an extreme Leninism's intolerant logic and turned the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics into a police state. The Communist Party was transformed from a revolutionary elite into a bureaucratic caste whose sole aim was to preserve and enhance the leader's power and its privileges. Gradually, the dictatorship of the proletariat became an empty slogan legitimizing Stalin's absolute reign and secret police repression against the population. Invoking Lenin's struggle against factionalism, Stalin completely destroyed any intraparty democracy, viciously persecuted all (real or imaginary) opponents and imposed a monolithic dictatorship based on permanent purges and mass terror. In the physical absence of Lenin, the numinous leader incarnating the absolute power of the party, the "imagined community of Leninist disciples" (Riegel 2005, 104) had to reinvent itself by means of founding its charisma on the scriptures of its founding fathers. The invented tradition of Marxism-Leninism was then thrust upon the party ranks as a means of stabilizing the normative identity of the party. The return to Leninism became an important theme of the anti-Stalin opposition, especially among Trotsky's supporters. Later, after Stalin's death in 1953,

Nikita Khrushchev proclaimed the restoration of the Leninist norms of party life and denounced Stalin's "cult of personality" (i.e., the quasi-religious adoration of the supreme leader) as non-Leninist. In the 1980s, Mikhail Gorbachev deepened Khrushchev's critique of Stalinism and sought to instill pluralism within Soviet institutions. In his democratizing efforts, Gorbachev went beyond the logic of Leninism and abandoned both the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the Party's claim to monopoly of power.

In 1919, Lenin created the Third (Communist) International—the Comintern. Earlier he had lambasted the Second International for its loss of revolutionary fervor and complicity with bourgeois parliaments and governments. The Comintern consecrated Moscow's centrality and hegemonic role within world communism. For a party to be accepted into Comintern, it had to unconditionally acquiesce in twenty-one conditions, including the complete subordination to Soviet dictates. Lenin created the Comintern as an instrument for expanding the revolution and allowing Soviet Russia to escape imperialist encirclement. Later, Stalin transformed it into a mere instrument of Soviet foreign policy and by implication Russian imperialism. The Comintern was disbanded in 1943, but communist parties continued to toe the Stalinist line. In the aftermath of World War II, Leninist parties came to power in east-central Europe, China, North Korea, and North Vietnam (a Soviet-style regime existed in Mongolia since the 1920s). Later, in 1960, Fidel Castro publicly espoused Leninism and proclaimed the communist nature of the Cuban revolution. In all these cases, communism represented the sum of political and ideological techniques (tactics) used by revolutionary parties to seize and consolidate monopolistic dictatorial regimes. Historian Martin Malia correctly branded communist systems as *partocratic ideocracies*. Their only claim to legitimacy derived from the organized belief structure shared by the elites and inculcated into the masses according to which the party was the sole beneficiary of direct access to historical truth.

Lenin modified Marxism in that he assigned the revolutionary role to the vanguard party rather than the proletarian class itself, he saw the outbreak of revolution in a less rather than more advanced country (Russia, not Western Europe), and made the dictatorship of the proletariat the core of his

theory of the communist state. In brief, thanks to Lenin's contribution to the Russianization of Marxism, Leninism represents a synthesis between Western, social democratic values and the Russian traditions of revolutionary violence. Lev Trotsky (born Bronstein) was another major Russian revolutionary who was initially opposed to Lenin's dictatorial propensities. During the October 1917 revolution, Trotsky became Lenin's closest political associate and served as the first Bolshevik minister (people's commissar) of defense and foreign affairs. Later, after Lenin's death, he defended revolutionary Leninism against Stalin. Trotsky accused Stalin of abandoning the international proletariat by focusing exclusively on building socialism within the USSR and of destroying any trace of democracy within the Leninist party. Less theoretically gifted than Lenin or Trotsky, Stalin codified and overly simplified Leninism, adjusting it to the needs and expectations of the average party bureaucracy. Instead of a revolutionary doctrine, Stalin's Leninism was just a means of legitimization for the party bureaucracy's exercise of power. Mao Zedong was a Chinese communist leader who adapted the main tenets of Leninism to China's conditions. Recognizing the weakness of the Chinese proletariat, Mao developed Lenin's theory of the revolutionary dictatorship of workers and peasants and brought the Chinese communists to power in 1949. Mao criticized Khrushchev for having renounced some of the basic Stalinist tenets, including the idea that class struggle continued and intensified under the conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Third World revolutionary elites identified themselves with Mao's passionate anti-imperialism and anticapitalism, as well as with the theory of rural guerrilla warfare. After Mao's death, in the context of the crisis of communist ideology and of the collapse of communist regimes in Europe, his interpretation of Marxism-Leninism was supplanted by state-encouraged market commitment, by nationalism, and by the idea of a harmonious society. The one constant dogma of Chinese communism is the monopoly of power by the Communist Party. In North Korea, the shock of 1989 in Europe generated increased autarky based on the doctrine of Military-First Politics and on *juche* (self-reliance) ideology that ensured continued totalitarian social control and rabid nationalism. Cuba has also complemented communism with anti-American nationalism in order to revitalize the regime's ideological legitimacy.

Marx proclaimed communism to be the genuine resolution of the conflict between man and nature and between man and man: “Communism is the riddle of history solved, and knows itself to be the solution.” The explanation for the exemplary fate and consequences of this doctrine is dependent on a few essential factors: the vision of its followers—a superior elite whose utopian goals sanctify the most barbaric methods; the denial of the right to life to those who are defined as degenerate parasites and predators, the deliberate dehumanization of state-defined enemies-victims; and what French historian Alain Besançon correctly identified as the ideological perversity at the heart of totalitarian thinking: the falsification of the idea of good (*la falsification du bien*). Communism attempted to encompass and filter through its ideological matrix all that had potential for public discourse. It tried to control and mediate any self-defining narrative. It created a “new type of cultural hegemony,” which aimed to carry out what Roger Griffin (2006, 93) called “an ‘anthropological revolution’ through the use of an essentially ritualistic and transformative politics.” Gorbachev’s reforms (known as *glasnost* and *perestroika*) aimed at rationalizing the Soviet system, injecting new life into Leninist institutions, streamlining the economy, condemning Stalinist atrocities, and restoring the original Bolshevik ideological enthusiasm. In fact, he resumed previous experiences meant to humanize socialism (the Hungarian Revolution, the Prague Spring, Marxism revisionism in Poland and Yugoslavia).

In Eastern Europe, there were several waves of revisionism represented by several Marxist humanist thinkers who advocated a moral rebirth of socialism that would allow moving away from the terror-tainted legitimacy of Soviet communism. This movement had been anticipated by Yugoslav theorists (the Praxis group) who felt compelled, by the very logic of the political conflict with the Soviet Stalinist elite, to rediscover the initial impulses of Marxist anthropology, sociology, and philosophy. Those most active, however, in the struggle against Stalinist obscurantism were Hungarian and Polish intellectuals, the exponents of a radical political outlook that inflamed the masses throughout the hectic months after the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The favorite theme in the discourses of East European philosophers, sociologists, and men of letters in general was the return to an idealized Marx: the attempt to detect those elements in Marx’s original design that

could justify the politically liberating changes within the system. Moreover, that endeavor was conceived as a rediscovery and reinterpretation of Marx's early works, of the whole Marxian philosophical legacy detested by the Stalinist ideologues. The concept of alienation became the basis of the most impassioned philosophical controversies, fostered the case for liberalization, and provided the theoretical basis for political criticism. With the Soviet military invasion in Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968), this current in Eastern European Marxism gradually gave way to the intellectual phenomenon of dissent, spearheaded by personalities such as Václav Havel, Adam Michnik, Agnes Heller, or Miklós Haraszti. The latter were the thinkers behind the revival of civil society that led to the upheaval of 1989.

The revolutions of 1989 demonstrated that communism had exhausted its appeals and led to the breakdown of the Leninist regimes in east-central Europe. In December 1991, the USSR came to an end. The demise of communism in Europe generated the space for alternative political mythologies, which determined a proliferation of what might be termed fantasies of salvation: ideological surrogates whose principal function was to unify the public discourse and provide citizens with an easily recognizable source of identity as a part of a vaguely defined ethnic (or political) community. One can conclude by quoting Polish philosopher Leszek Kołakowski (2005, 1212), an intellectual who experienced both the seduction of Marxism and the bitter disenchantment with its practical applications: "The self-deification of mankind, to which Marxism gave philosophical expression, has ended in the same way as all such attempts, whether individual or collective: it has revealed itself as the farcical aspect of human bondage."

Vladimir Tismaneanu

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Communitarianism and Liberalism

The 1980s witnessed a determined assault on liberal political theory, in particular, the neutrality liberalism of John Rawls and Ronald Dworkin and by communitarian thinkers, such as Amitai Etzioni, Alasdair MacIntyre, Michael Sandel, Charles Taylor, and Michael Walzer. In general, communitarians believe that contemporary liberal democracies are too individualistic, atomized, and lacking in shared values. They see this state of affairs as aided and abetted by liberal political theory, which neglects the role and value of community both as something to be valued and as a generator of values. The central liberal error is to conceive of individuals as identifiable in isolation from the communities that form them. This conception leads to an excessive emphasis on individual rights, liberties, and autonomy and to a corresponding neglect of the values and identity that people have in common. Morality and politics are in any case always oriented to some conception of the good, and consequently the Rawlsian liberal ideal of a state that is neutral among conceptions of the good is strictly impossible as well as undesirable. Rather, we should be pursuing a politics of the common good.

Within this broad commonality, communitarianism encompasses a range of views—indeed, not all of those who have been classified as communitarians have been happy to accept that label. All communitarians tend to be critical of liberalism, but some more so than others. At the strong end of communitarianism in this regard, MacIntyre and Sandel have been highly critical of liberalism, while Taylor's and Walzer's views are more

conciliatory. There are also ideological differences among communitarians, with identifiably conservative, socialist, and liberal variants.

It is also worth noting that the liberal-communitarian debate of the 1980s is to some extent an echo of earlier and larger philosophical disputes. The differences between liberal universalism and communitarian particularism were rehearsed by the followers of Immanuel Kant and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel at the turn of the 19th century. That contest, in turn, reflects the perennial tension between universalism and relativism in ethics.

The remainder of this entry is divided into three parts: first, an outline of the communitarian critique of liberalism; second, a review of liberal responses to that critique; and third, a brief note on the status of the debate now.

The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism

Communitarians believe that liberal thinking neglects community in two main ways: as a source of value, and as an object of value. The first of these concerns addresses the question of where our values come from. According to communitarians, liberals falsely suppose that people choose their values freely as if from a supermarket shelf—hence, the excessive liberal emphasis on personal autonomy. This liberal picture is reinforced at the level of theory by views such as Rawls's theory of justice, which begins by imagining people choosing principles of justice from an original position in which their identifying features and conceptions of the good are screened off by a veil of ignorance.

While the purpose of Rawls's original position is to model the notion of impartiality, communitarians such as Sandel argue that the Rawlsian strategy depends on a false and incoherent conception of the human person as self prior to its ends—that is, a notion of persons as in some sense separable from the particular characteristics, including values, language, and culture that make them who they are. This metaphysical or Kantian notion of the self, Sandel (1982, 179) argues, makes no sense; it is “to imagine a person wholly without character, without moral depth.” The truth is that people are intimately identified with the communities in which they are brought up and in which they live. The self is not atomistic, but rather it

is situated in a community or encumbered or constituted by its communal identity.

Moreover, the communitarians argue, liberal atomism connects with the equally dubious doctrine of liberal neutrality. If the individual could be conceived independently of any particular conception of the good, then so too could the state. In fact, however, neither is possible. Despite liberal protestations, the liberal state turns out to be identified, like the liberal person, by a distinctively liberal conception of the good focused on values such as personal autonomy.

The second main problem with liberalism is that it neglects community as a value in itself. The individualism that characterizes modern liberal democracies leaves such societies without adequate sources of unity—in particular without a sufficiently substantial set of shared values. Thus, Etzioni laments a social arena in which previously accepted standards have been undermined but not replaced with anything except a profusion of personal lifestyle choices. “The result,” writes Etzioni (1995, 24), “is rampant moral confusion and social anarchy,” and what is needed is the reassertion of a common morality: “To return to a society in which certain actions are viewed as beyond the pale.”

Liberal Responses to Communitarianism

The communitarian critique has been countered by some vigorous liberal responses. Even within communitarian ranks, doubts and qualifications have emerged over time. Walzer, for example, has pointed to a major tension between the claim that liberal accounts of atomized selves misdescribe social reality and the claim that community is undervalued in liberal societies, tension suggests that such societies really are atomistic. Liberals would add that both claims are exaggerated.

First, most liberals would deny that they hold an atomistic conception of the individual self, and they would argue that the communitarian criticism on this score misses the point. The liberal point is not that the self is an isolated metaphysical entity detached from all identifying particulars, but that we should see individual human beings as having a capacity for personal

autonomy—that is, for being able to take a critically reflective view of their own cultural, moral, and other attachments. This autonomy need not be thought of as involving a person's detaching herself from all of her commitments simultaneously—that really would be inconceivable. Rather, liberals say that people are capable of piecemeal questioning of their own values and commitments by asking themselves how well these cohere with their other values and commitments, which may include universal considerations. History and one's own personal experience are full of cases in which people have revised their beliefs, values, and identities through critical reflection.

Second, liberals would resist the claim that they fail to appreciate the benefits of communal belonging. For one thing, the basic liberal commitment to freedom of association and expression implies the importance that all liberals attach to communities whose membership is voluntary: churches, sports clubs, professional bodies, and so forth. In the case of communities in which membership is not chosen—cultural groups, for example—the matter is more complicated since groups of this kind sometimes restrict the freedom of their individual members in ways that put them at odds with the fundamental principles of liberalism. But again, it is far too simple to say that liberalism is unable to value this kind of group membership at all. Will Kymlicka, for example, has argued that cultural membership is just as fundamental to the well-being of individuals as are individual rights and economic resources.

More generally, liberals do care about social unity, if only because liberal states rest their legitimacy on their citizens' consent. Liberalism is not founded on moral skepticism, but on a reasoned commitment to a core set of values, including individual liberty and toleration. Consequently, liberal theory seeks to justify consensus on the privileging of these values at the very least. Thus, liberals do after all subscribe to a notion of the common good, although this will be founded on, as Rawls puts it, a thin theory of the good that leaves room for people to differ when it comes to the thick details.

If liberals uphold a conception of the good, then what becomes of liberal neutrality? There are two main strategies. Some liberals have been prepared

to jettison neutrality altogether and to affirm that liberalism does rest on a specifically liberal conception of the good characterized by its own set of distinctive values, such as personal autonomy or toleration (see, for example, Joseph Raz 1986 and William Galston 1991). This comprehensive liberalism is usually allied to liberal perfectionism, which means that the comprehensive liberal good may be legitimately promoted by the state. Such a regime is then justified because, even though comprehensive, it is more accommodating than the alternatives, leaving room for many different interpretations.

The route proposed by other liberals, including Rawls in his later work, is to retain the idea of neutrality but in a qualified form. In *Political Liberalism*, Rawls (1993) argues that his theory of justice should be understood as a purely political rather than comprehensive view, applying only to liberal democracies and even there requiring the allegiance of citizens only in the public sphere rather than in their private lives. This move appears to recognize that no political system can be absolutely neutral on the good, but that a degree of neutrality can be maintained, or at least aspired to, within certain parameters.

Liberals have not only sought to defend themselves against communitarian criticisms, but also have taken the offensive themselves. One obvious liberal worry about the communitarian politics of the common good is its authoritarian potential since the claims of the community, or the common good, have often, historically, come into conflict with those of individuals or minorities.

Another concern is the relativist strain in communitarianism. The starting point in communitarian moral thinking is not a universal principle but the de facto beliefs and values of some actual community. Since different communities have different beliefs and values, it appears that communitarianism tends naturally in the direction of cultural relativism. The obvious shortcoming of this approach from a liberal point of view is that the consistent communitarian, like the consistent cultural relativist, is obliged to defend as legitimate whatever the relevant community believes to be legitimate, no matter how unjust or unethical this may be from the perspective of human rights and freedoms.

Finally, when we refer to the relevant community, which community do we mean? The idea of community is highly ambiguous between different kinds and levels of commonality. Different visions of community are upheld by rival communitarian thinkers, yielding competing communitarian ideologies: traditional communities are commended by conservatives, egalitarian and participatory communities by Marxists and other radicals, and pluralist communities by liberals or centrists.

The Legacy of the Debate

Although some political theorists would no doubt disagree, many would say that the liberal-communitarian debate, at least in the form discussed here, has largely run its course. Few if any liberals would now deny that the self is to some extent situated or that communities can be valuable. On the other hand, few communitarians would now deny that communities can sometimes be oppressive or insist that persons, at any rate in modern societies, are so thoroughly situated that they are incapable of critical reflection and autonomy.

There is thus a broad consensus that each side had something to learn from the other, although which side had more to learn remains disputed. While communitarians might see their work as importantly reforming or correcting or at least supplementing liberal thought, liberals still tend to regard communitarianism as for the most part resting on misunderstanding and exaggeration and at best as reminding liberals of what they knew already.

Nevertheless, communitarian thinking has undoubtedly been influential in many areas of contemporary political thought, either through the values it advocates or the conceptual analysis it offers. In these different ways, communitarian approaches have been promoted, or at least noted, in fields as disparate as distributive justice, immigration, nationalism, feminism, and international relations.

There is one field, however, where communitarianism has had a greater impact than in any other: multiculturalism. The tension between different levels of community was noted above. In the context of multiculturalism, an

especially important tension is that between larger communities and the subcommunities within them. While the goal of the communitarians of the 1980s was usually to promote the unity of whole political societies, it soon became clear that the logic of respect for community could equally support the claims of internal minority groups. In this respect the work of Taylor (on the communitarian side) and Kymlicka (a liberal sympathetic to some communitarian themes) has served as a bridge from communitarianism to multiculturalism.

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See also [Community](#); [Liberalism](#); [Rawls](#), [John](#)

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Community

The idea of community has a controversial and contested status within social and political thought. Many see it as a concept central to understanding social and political life because it draws attention to what people have in common and what binds them together. It refers also to the close social relationships surrounding individuals and their immediate families, which anchor them into the larger society. The classical conception was that it was natural for people to be embedded within such communities, which would command their most powerful personal and political loyalties. Larger societies would develop out of combinations of these local groupings, and political authority would continue to draw upon the underlying strengths of community. This argument formed part of Karl Marx's vision of precapitalist societies and is a key aspect of the thinking of the early French sociologist Émile Durkheim, who saw the weakening of community in modern society as a major political and moral problem, threatening disorder and social disintegration.

Community is unusual in almost always being viewed positively. Radicals and conservatives alike find things to applaud about it, though invariably pointing to very different examples and aspects. Along with figuring in a wide variety of political traditions and ideologies, the notion of community is employed as a practical and rhetorical expression by politicians and policy makers, as well as in everyday speech among ordinary members of society. This broad usage gives it a depth and complexity of meaning but also can make it seem vague and confusing. As a multilayered

phenomenon, community has substantive, practical, and normative connotations. It can refer to ideas of common belonging and identification, involvement in shared social relations, action undertaken together, and the possession of common goals or shared interests. While many regard community as an ideal worth pursuing, others perceive it to be a dangerous and socially reprehensible illusion. Critics condemn the notion for being incoherent, or obsolete, and defenders of community are sometimes accused of romanticism for trying to resist what others regard as irresistible forces, such as contemporary globalization.

Historical Background

The concept of community has a long philosophical history with roots at least as far back as ancient Greek conceptions of the polis, which connected membership in a political community with the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, and separated those who belonged from others who were alien, usually regarded as inferior and potentially hostile. The gradual emergence of a distinctive framework of political institutions and authority also linked questions about community to the rise of city life and to the broader development of civilization. These issues continue to fuel debates about the changing nature and relevance of community. In the late nineteenth century the German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies classically contrasted community (*Gemeinschaft*) with society (*Gesellschaft*), making society a grander, more abstract phenomenon capable of containing a variety of communities. While encouraging a broad historical perspective that discerns a movement away from one toward the other, Tönnies also proposed that community and society, or association, represented two permanent underlying principles of social organization: one consisting of close, emotional ties between known individuals, such as might occur in a family or tribal grouping, the other indicating the more impersonal, rational relationship typical of formal associations, large organizations, and modern societies. Similar distinctions have framed the ensuing debate about community.

Following Tönnies, many analysts have adopted a historical evolutionary perspective that associates community most strongly with older, premodern or traditional societies where the individual appears to be thoroughly

enmeshed in a predetermined set of social relationships that are closely integrated, long established, and taken for granted. These organic communities are seen as exerting an overwhelming moral pressure on their members, who inevitably share very similar experiences and worldviews. Communities, therefore, appear to be marked by sameness and consensus. Sociological researchers looking for objective empirical examples of this model have usually found them to be characteristic of quite specific conditions, such as rural, small-scale, village-like social structures. Craig Calhoun's (1998, 391) comment that community life can be understood as life lived in "dense, multiplex, relatively autonomous networks of social relationships" captures this conclusion. It prompts a typical question about the applicability of community to larger-scale, more urban, and more modern social circumstances. A major theme of discussion has been the persistence of community over decades and centuries and its capacity to cope with new situations and pressures. A dominant view has been that genuine community becomes decreasingly viable under conditions of modernity and postmodernity, as it is undermined by processes of industrialization, urbanization, and the spread of formal democracy, mass media, and public opinion. Those favoring this position speak of the loss of community along with the search for new forms of community, and they often display nostalgia for the communities of the past. Yet influential contemporary theorists such as the Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman and the Spanish urban researcher Manuel Castells point to a paradoxical resurgence of enthusiasm for community when conditions appear particularly hostile to it, for example, in the shape of religious fundamentalism, ethnic solidarity, and certain kinds of nationalism.

Community can refer to an objectively observable social structure, a set of institutions and relationships that enable people to live together, or a more subjective quality occurring in almost any social relationship, wherever there is a feeling of belonging together or of having a common identity. The American sociologist Robert Nisbet (1967, 47) used the term *communion* to describe the sense of community present in relationships showing a high degree of "personal intimacy, emotional depth, moral commitment, social cohesion and continuity in time." This approach distances community from more calculated, short-term, and dispassionate relationships in which individuals might be considered to make less personal investment. A

substantial literature suggests that the growth of contractual relationships, spelling out the rights and obligations of the various parties involved, high levels of personal and social mobility, and a complicated division of labor all militate against the survival of traditional communities where people could know and relate to one another in a variety of different activities and respects. Instead of close personal contact within a familiar social environment, people today routinely deal with anonymous strangers, or meet only in narrow roles, in situations of change. This trend stimulates considerable debate about whether this increasing anonymity represents a harmful social transformation and about how far it may be possible to rebuild community in contexts where most relationships are limited and transitory.

Debates and Critiques

The existence of any community poses questions of political representation, the distribution of power within and around it, and ways in which members' wishes can be properly expressed. Resolving these matters can be problematic since community boundaries are not always clearly defined and can overlap or conflict with one another. Authorities must take note of the varying communities to which people belong, and political systems must facilitate their demands. For instance, the presence of geographical communities usually leads to requirements for some form of local government or administration. In addition to occurring in communities of place, such as small towns or urban neighborhoods, communal ties can develop within religious groupings, in groups defined by ethnic or cultural factors, or around social and political movements. Communities can also form within social classes. These categories all have the capability of generating powerful collective identities, shaping the views and actions of their members, and helping them work together to accomplish shared ends. Even highly structured workplaces and bureaucracies can take on aspects of community, as social ties develop between the personnel within them. Special effort may be devoted to cultivating these attributes of community and to enhancing members' motivation and loyalty to the organization, although commentators who regard spontaneous, unconscious intimacy as a sign of community may doubt the authenticity of any community that results from deliberate planning and design.

Positioned between the individual and society as a whole, communities are vulnerable to pressures from either direction. Political liberalism has sought to free individuals from the restrictions of community so as to take part in the market and make personal choices, but individualism can be destructive of community. So, too, can social collectivism, for instance, through the inflated power of the state. Later theorists have echoed Durkheim's view that intermediate groupings between individuals and society need to be maintained and strengthened to prevent excessive individualism and social alienation. During the 1950s, this danger formed part of the mass society thesis, which addressed fears that citizens of Western democracies were becoming a lonely crowd vulnerable to political manipulation and demagoguery. It has been revived more recently by influential commentators such as Amitai Etzioni and Robert Putnam and debated among a group of prominent North American political philosophers, including Charles Taylor and John Rawls. Arguments deployed for enlarging the role of community groups and voluntary associations as a way of engaging with a more active citizenship are reminiscent of the case made for the importance of civil society organizations in sustaining political democracies.

Etzioni's communitarianism advocates a middle ground between the state collectivism associated with the political left and the radical individualism of free-market neoliberalism. His Third Way brings active communities into the picture as a moral voice asserting social responsibility alongside individual rights. Opponents claim that this approach has more plausibility when applied to better-off communities but is less practicable for deprived communities starved of resources and lacking necessary skills. It has also been interpreted as a way of transferring responsibility, with associated costs, from the state to informal local groups. Putnam identifies a long-term decline in community connections in modern America, symbolized by readiness to bowl alone rather than join clubs and associations. This weakening of communal links is said to reduce people's capacity to participate in political life, as they withdraw into relatively isolated lives. Putnam has helped popularize the term *social capital* to refer to resources gained from membership in communities. The social ties that bond (within communities) and bridge (between communities) are held to be essential foundations for relationships of trust and cooperation. Putnam has shown

that television is a prime culprit in undermining social capital because viewing it keeps people inside, away from their neighbors, and much of its content makes them fearful of interacting with others.

Others find this insistence on the value of community alarming because it ignores negative consequences. They highlight a darker side, signifying social oppression and exclusion. The feminist philosopher Iris Young advocates the politics of difference, celebrating social diversity and cultural pluralism. Her ideal is a cosmopolitan world of meaningful exchanges among strangers. By contrast, community can appear collectively authoritarian, elevating similarity above difference and playing down important distinctions of class, gender, and lifestyle. The sociologist Richard Sennett writes of the destructive *Gemeinschaft* that can develop as communities become preoccupied with pursuing their own interests while drawing up boundaries that exclude others to the detriment of privacy and freedom of choice.

But communities do not necessarily imply close harmony and agreement. Social scientists researching in actual communities frequently find them to be riddled with conflict and division. British social anthropologist Anthony Cohen argues that community should be regarded as something people construct so as to talk about who does or does not belong, thereby differentiating themselves from other groups. Rather than being fixed, boundaries around communities can be negotiated and revised, according to circumstances. The political theorist Benedict Anderson suggests that people can imagine themselves to be fellow members even of very large communities, like nations. This imagination is reinforced through processes of social construction and communication. An emphasis on how people themselves conceptualize community fits well with contemporary circumstances in which membership in communities appears largely a matter of preference with people staking claims on political resources through their allegiance to different communities of interest, choice, and identity. Against the pessimistic tone of much discussion around the future of community, this voluntaristic stance opens up possibilities for all sorts of new and revived communities—of faith, lifestyle, and sexual preference—as well as virtual communities and social networks using new technologies of communication.

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See also [Alienation](#); [Citizenship](#); [Civil Society](#); [Class](#); [Communitarianism and Liberalism](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Durkheim, Émile](#); [Globalization](#); [Liberalism](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Nationalism](#); [Rawls, John](#); [Representation](#); [Republicanism](#); [Tönnies, Ferdinand](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [Utopianism](#)

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Comte, Auguste

Isidore Auguste Marie François Xavier Comte (1798–1857), mathematician, philosopher, social theorist, reformer, and in later years, would-be founder of a new world religion is notable in the history of thought chiefly for his grand, and somewhat eccentric, systematization of positivism.

Comte's System

Positivisme, a Comte coinage, meant more than a philosophy of science based on a methodological insistence on empirically based (positive) reasoning, though it was certainly that. A cornerstone of Comte's system was its claim to have extended scientific principles to cover the entire human domain. But positive had a political meaning, too. Positive philosophy, in contrast with the individualistic and metaphysical *négalivisme* that had come to prominence in the Revolution, was social and constructive, and underpinned a practical program for the rebuilding of post-Revolutionary France. This program was all the more practical, Comte thought, because, unlike the mystical dogmas of theists and the speculative utopias of metaphysicians, it was scientifically based and thus in tune with the real development and workings of society. *Savoir pour prévoir, à fin de pouvoir*. Not that positivism switched one epistemological absolutism for another. Eschewing the search for ultimate causes, its truths were relative, limited, in the form of scientific laws, to phenomena and their predictable

regularities. The historical necessity for such a shift in perspective was both a premise of positivist politics and a unifying proposition internal to its theory of knowledge.

Comte's *positivisme*, then, was an all-embracing and historically self-situated synthesis of knowledge, thought, and action. For Comte, moreover, the establishment and dissemination of this synthesis was a matter of great urgency. For only thus could the great crisis of French and European society be resolved by providing, on a secure epistemological footing, the mental and moral framework for the new social order that science and industry (organized work) were ushering in.

A key ingredient in Comte's system was the founding, which he claimed to have done, of a positive science of society. Sociology, or social physics as he first called it, would complete the order of the sciences, capping the development, successively, of mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, and biology. This completion would make possible for the first time a philosophy of scientific knowledge as a whole and indeed, a philosophy that for the first time was itself positive in as much as sociology of the Comtean sort (nomothetic, macroscopic, historicizing) enabled us to grasp knowledge and its genesis as itself a scientifically cognizable object. Sociology would also provide a scientific basis for politics. From its laws of statics and dynamics could be derived both an objective understanding of the current crisis—seen as the pathological prolongation of a difficult and conflictual transition—and an orientating model of what, when fully emerged, the normal form of industrial society would be.

Social statics concerned the interrelation of institutions within any given configuration and the binding of individuals into groups. Comte followed Catholic conservatives such as Joseph-Marie de Maistre and Louis de Bonald in stressing hierarchy and corporateness and generally having an organicist view of the social totality. A society was, however, an organism of organisms like a giant polyp, and given the natural (though educable) preponderance of the egoistic instincts over the social and altruistic ones, which Comte linked to the physiology of the brain, the integration of that totality was always problematic. Hence, the problem—prominent in

classical French sociology—of the relation of individual and society, and of the social tie.

In his earlier writings, Comte stressed the importance for social order of overarching systems of belief and knowledge. He later complemented this work with a detailed account of the affective dimension, highlighting the cultivation of altruistic sentiments, successively, within family, tribe, nation, and humanity. What secured the requisite unity of hearts and minds overall, however, was religion, together with its apparatus of education, worship, and moral regulation. Religion here was defined in terms of its reproductive (rebinding) function, rather than with reference to any suprasensible deity and its particular form and content was conceived as a historical variable, dependent on the interlinked state of knowledge and production.

The cardinal principle of social dynamics was the law of three stages. This law held that collective mental development followed the logic of individual mental development, passing from an infant stage of imaginary beings and magic (the theological stage) through the ego-striving, rebellions, and idealisms of adolescence (the metaphysical stage) to the realism and knowledge-based action of maturity (the positive stage). The process was ruptural, with no linear emergence of scientificity out of animism and theism. The intermediate stage of metaphysics, necessary for transition, represented a contradictory amalgam. The path to positivization was also uneven, proceeding through the successive positivization of each of the fundamental sciences, beginning with the most general and abstract and ending with the science of society. This whole movement, in turn, was keyed to the wider development of society—which also passed through three stages—through the dual relation of knowledge to technique and production on the one side and on the other, via religion and the dominant philosophy, to the mechanisms for reproducing the social tie.

The general line of march was from a localized agrarian-based society, with warfare and military rule, to a more peaceful world of *grandes sociétés* engaged in ever more extensive and interlinked forms of production and trade. Between them came a long and conflictual transitional phase, whose European origins Comte placed in the twelfth century with the rise of towns, guild production, and scholastic rationalism. The crisis had come to

a head in 1789, but while the Crown and aristocracy had been overthrown, religio-intellectual warfare continued. The Revolution had swept away the rotting institutions of the old order without sustainably establishing a new one. For this it was necessary first to complete the mental revolution that the rise of the natural sciences with Francis Bacon, Galileo, René Descartes, and Isaac Newton had initiated. Positivism, as an overall philosophy, would in turn provide a synthesizing middle way between the warring ideological parties of republican progressivism (which did not understand the prerequisites for order in the new regime) and counterrevolutionary conservatism (which did not understand the impossibility of returning to the old one), the intractability of which destabilized the French polity and threatened to derail both order and progress. The price of failure, at the limit, was a descent into anarchy in which the very survival of society as *un être composé* was at stake.

The stabilization of the new industrial-positive order also required an institutional reorganization. Comte's program for this evolved, but its main features remained constant from his early writings onward. In keeping with the task specialization that characterized industrialism, there would be a strict division of labor, both within the spheres of production, administration, and knowledge and within society as a whole. In keeping with what he took to be a universal law of social statics—and against the radical egalitarianism of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the Jacobins—there would also be hierarchical order, with technocratic elites disposing over the state, while proletarians and women (the loving sex), under the leadership of intellectuals (of a positive sort), ruled hearts and minds through education and moral suasion. Overall, this reproduced, in updated dress, a medieval dualism: temporal rule by the lords of production—industrialists, engineers, and bankers—spiritual rule by scientist-teachers, coordinated by cadres of positive philosophers. After Comte's religious turn, the latter morphed into a fully organized church, replete with a catechism, public and private rituals, and a calendar of remembrances culminating in a festival of the dead. Thomas Henry Huxley described the results as Catholicism without Christ, and certainly Comte's intent was to keep the integrative forms of Catholicism while replacing its scientifically outmoded contents with the demystified worship of the "true Great Being": society and Humanity.

Comte expounded his system, which became ever more elaborate, in voluminous writings, chief among which are the six-volume *Cours de philosophie positive* (1830–42) and the four-volume *Système de politique positive* (1852–54). The first of these was hailed by many contemporaries, including John Stuart Mill, as a major intellectual landmark. The *Politique positive*, however, which, among other things, aimed to be both a treatise on sociology and the founding of la *religion de l'Humanité* with Comte himself as its *Grand-prêtre*, divided his followers and earned much ridicule. It aimed to introduce into all aspects of Comte's system the dimension of sentiments-feelings and substituting a ternary schema for a binary one of theory and practice alone. In the same stroke, it also shifted from the creation of an objective synthesis (whose insufficiency it thus recognized) to a subjective one, issuing in a projected work designed to draw the reader—in the first instance trainee positivist priests—into a simultaneously mental and passional relation with the cosmology and social-altruistic perspective that underlay it. This shift would later be complemented by further synthesizing totalizations—of action, of morale—but Comte died before he was able to complete this work, leaving only the first of a finally projected four volume summary of the subjective synthesis and sketches for others.

Life and Works

Born two years before Napoleon Bonaparte's coup to a fervently Catholic and royalist petit-bourgeois family in Montpellier, Comte's life and work unfolded amid the turbulent aftermath of the French Revolution. It was a period marked by incessant struggles between republican and antirepublican forces, the latter ideologically led by an unreconstructed Catholic Church, which retained control of primary and much of secondary education until the post-Dreyfus reforms in the Third Republic. During his own lifetime, there were four further changes of regime, in 1814, 1830, 1848, and 1852, leading to two monarchies, a second republic, and a second Napoleonic empire.

Comte had quarrelsome relations with his family, and by the time he entered the elite École Polytechnique in 1814 to study for a career as a mining engineer, he had become a staunch republican. After the defeat of

Napoleon, he played a leading role in the student agitation that greeted the Bourbon restoration and Napoleon's brief return. A further protest against the exam system led to the closure of the École. When it reopened a year later, Comte refused to make a promise of good behavior as the price of readmission.

In 1816, after a term studying biology at Montpellier (France's oldest medical school), he returned to Paris, where he found part-time work as a mathematics tutor, read voraciously, and began to style himself Auguste. With a growing interest in political economy (particularly, the Scottish historical school), he was drawn to Henri de Saint-Simon and his circle and in 1819, became Saint-Simon's secretary. To the further consternation of his father, in 1825 he married Caroline Massin, a free-spirited woman of working-class origin who was rumored to supplement Comte's meager earnings through other liaisons.

Comte's relations with Saint-Simon were close. But what began as a mentorship and progressed to intellectual collaboration (including as editor of Saint-Simon's journal *l'Industrie*) ended in irreparable conflict with charges and countercharges of plagiarism. These came to a head in 1824 when Saint-Simon insisted on publishing in his own name an essay Comte claimed as his own. How to disentangle Saint-Simon's thought from Comte's has always been a vexed question. There is no doubt that they shared a diagnosis of the intense conflicts between progressives and reactionaries that dominated the post-Revolutionary scene and of what was wrong with both positions. They were also agreed on the need for a moral reform of emergent industrial society based, doctrinally, on a secular-scientific replacement for otherworldly religion. Overall, it would be fair to say that Saint-Simon, influenced by Bacon, Condorcet, Destutt de Tracy, and the Ideologues (with borrowings from Maistre and Bonald) pioneered the outlines of what became Comte's system, but it was Comte who turned it into a system. In doing so, moreover, he considerably modified its ingredients. Gone, with sociology and positive philosophy, was Saint-Simon's singular science of man. Gone too was the reductive unification of knowledge around some single natural law (gravity, thought Saint-Simon). The philanthropic love that was at the emotional center of both of their forms of religiosity was also more ascetic and hierarchical in Comte's "live

for the other” (*vivre pour l’autrui*) than in Saint-Simon’s “love one another as brothers”

Comte’s early writings in the 1820s already contained the main elements of his analysis of, and solution to, the social crisis. They also began to work out the elements of social physics and its place among the positive sciences. Noteworthy is an essay on François Brossais’s *De l’irritation*, which foreshadowed the uses Comte would later make of biology in developing a notion of equilibrium and a physiologically based theory of sentiments. Comte thought well enough of these essays that, two decades later, he appended all six, under the title *Opuscules fondamentales*, to the last volume of *Politique positive*.

In 1826, Comte began a course of lectures that eventually became the six volumes of *Cours de philosophie positive*. However, his writings and lectures were interrupted by a severe episode of mental illness. This illness led to his first being hospitalized and then being nursed back to health at home by the long-suffering Massin. He later recalled the experience as a regression to fetishism (the animistic first stage of theism) and then back again, through all the phases of mental development, to positivity as he regained mental balance. In addition to what may have been a bipolar condition, Comte suffered recurrent bouts of stomach pain.

The volume-by-volume publication of the *Cours* at first attracted little notice outside the coterie who had gathered round Comte’s lectures, but with the final volumes on sociology, he began to draw support from a few important backers including, in Paris, Émile Littré. It was certainly a tour de force, providing a theorized history of each of the fundamental sciences, the phenomenal levels of the natural order to which their object domains corresponded, the different methods proper to each, and the logic of their successive development toward positivity. The whole account culminated in the founding of sociology, which comprehended this movement and the logico-historical necessity for its completion.

Always in straitened circumstances, Comte found recurrent employment as an examiner in mathematics at the École Polytechnique. However, his increasingly acrimonious attempts to secure a professorial chair at that institution were unsuccessful. He finally burned his bridges with a scathing

personal attack on his envious persecutors. Whatever ambitions he may have harbored to make the École Polytechnique itself a radiating center of the new philosophy came to an end. Instead, he would form his own organization, the Positivist Society, which he launched in 1848.

The most important event, however, to affect the development of his project was his tragic love affair with Clotilde de Vaux. A young widow with a passion for literature, she insisted on celibacy. Theirs would be the shared love of two pure souls devoted to humanity. Comte and Massin had separated, in part because of his increasingly conservative, not to say medieval-chivalric, views on the role of women. Through his intense relation with Clotilde these views crystallized, but with the epiphany that if women were predisposed to rule hearts in parallel with men's rule over minds, and if the synthesis of thought and feeling was essential for overall social order, then women and feelings had a strategic role to play at every level of positivism's system and program.

When, after a rapid illness, Clotilde died of tuberculosis in 1846, Comte was paralyzed with grief. After days of seclusion and prayer he emerged with a feeling of religious conversion. Clotilde was to be memorialized as *ma sainte ange*, with intercessionary power. Their love incarnated the altruism that was at the summit of the sentiments, an altruism kept alive through his memorial devotions. Their relation became a paradigm for the more general dictum that "man is saved through woman." Comte himself, finding in all this a vital complement, at the level of feelings, to the intellectual basis positive philosophy had provided for a post-theistic morale, took on the role of religious leader and, in the *Système de politique positive* (1850–52), laid out the doctrine, rules, and ceremonials of his new religion.

The *Système* was a multileveled work. On its programmatic side, it presented itself as both a founding religious document and as the sociologically arrived-at ground plan for a fully positive polity (written, as if in the future, describing what its normal form would be). Besides providing a comprehensive blueprint of all facets of social life from the economic administrative and juridical to the familial, artistic, and religious, it emphasized the international dimension. At the apex of social

development humanity would assume the form of a federation of nation-states, spiritually unified in a syncretistic cult of the Great Being, Humanity.

At the same time, it was a treatise on sociology itself. As in the first system, sociology was divided into statics and dynamics. These, though, were much expanded, with sentiments systematically woven in. They were woven in, moreover, not just as elements of the knowledge object, but subjectively, so as to infuse with love for the social totality the ennobling story of humanity's emergence into the fullness of its potential. There was also much attention to the temporal side of *société*. For Comte, introducing a distinction subsequent sociology was to drop, social integration, even in industrial society, depended not only on ties among the living (*solidarité*), but also on ties between the present generation and those of the past and future (*continuité*). Correlatively, the Humanity worshipped in positive religion was a temporal as well as spatial totality. It included the dead and the not yet born, the stages of Humanity's becoming as well as its present members and forms of being. Given that the history of Humanity's emergence was mostly complete, this meant, too, that the greater part of it could only exist in memory. Hence, the great importance in positive religion of memorial sites and practices, with public veneration for Humanity's greatest benefactors, family-based cults for the worthy majority and—positivism's equivalent of damnation—oblivion for criminals and the antisocial. Overall, we may note, positive sociology in this subjective register functioned like a kind of theology. As with the Christian version, the object it aimed to understand was simultaneously an object of faith and worship. There was the difference, though, that Comte's god was a self-consciously human creation, not just in representation, but in its very being, through the work both of memory and morale-building required to sustain it.

Comte played a minor but active role in the tumultuous events of 1848 to 1851, which saw the overthrow of Louis Philippe, the declaration and collapse of the Second Republic, and the coming to power of Louis Napoleon and the Second Empire. To this latter, Comte gave qualified support, as a second best to what he had been calling for: a transitional revolutionary government along the (nondemocratic) lines of the post-Thermidor Convention. Meanwhile, he sought to build his church and in his

Appel aux conservateurs, to draw together a larger coalition of primarily conservative forces to press for the changes outlined in *Système de politique positive*. These efforts were not notably successful, although Comte did enter into a dialogue with Felicité Robert de Lamennais, a prominent Catholic theologian, and Catholics and Positivists joined forces to campaign against the removal of the Parisian cemetery to the outskirts of the city. As for the Positivist Society, by the time of Comte's death in 1857, the Paris headquarters was already hardening into a fissiparous sect. Nonetheless, branches were set up in England and in several countries of Latin America, where Comte's positivism proved to be a congenial counter-Catholic ideology for modernizing elites in post-Bolívarian regimes. To this day, the Brazilian flag carries the motto "Ordo e progresso." It is also a Brazilian positivist whose iconic mother-and-child portrait of Humanity cradling the future in her hands is still displayed at 12 Rue Monseigneur-le-Prince in Paris, where Comte's former house has been preserved as a museum and shrine.

Much of Comte's writing in the 1850s concerned the popularization of his church and philosophy. Besides the *Appel*, these writings included *L'Esprit de Positivism* and *Cathechisme positiviste*. His system, however, was not yet complete. The *Politique positive*, in its quasi-theological transfiguration of sociology, had initiated a wider resynthesis of knowledge. In its full form, the *synthèse subjective* was to consist of treatises on each of the fundamental sciences treated in the *Cours*, plus a seventh, *la morale*, which drew from biology and sociology to produce a crowning science of the soul. Of the latter, he left only a diagrammatic note. Astronomy, physics, and chemistry, he hoped, would be the work of others, and sociology, he considered to have been covered by the *Politique positive*. He did, however, complete volume one, *Logique positive, ou traité de philosophie mathématique*. An immense work, and his last, the *Logique* provided a ground plan for the whole subjective synthesis as well as an account of mathematics itself, conceived as a growing synthesis of sentiments and reason via the successive rise and eventual integration of number, algebra and geometry.

The preface also elaborated on a modification Comte had made to his religious symbolism. In its initial form, positive religion had centered on a singular cult of Humanity. In its modified form, there were three objects of

worship. To *l'Humanité* as *le Grand-Être* were added *la Terre*, as *le Grand-Fétiche* and *l'Espace*, as *le Grand Milieu*. This same trinity was built into the schema for the *synthèse subjective*. The work in its entirety was designed, among other things, to lead its readers successively through an appreciation for each of the transcending categories making up the revised positivist cult.

Through mathematics would be revealed the grandeur of space as the ground of the whole natural order, through the physical sciences the grandeur of our planet as the material ground of life, and through sociology and *la morale*, as the crown of the life sciences, the grandeur of the social being in which (in the Pauline phrase Comte liked to quote) “we move, breathe, and have our being.” In his insistence that space, earth, and humanity, with their trail of metaphoric associations, be venerated as if they were living spirits, while at the same time being consciously regarded as products of the imagination through which the axes of positivism’s worldview could be emotionally and cognitively fixed, Comte’s thinking takes a strange turn. In effect, positive religion now presents itself less as a demystified climax to monotheism than as a demystified form of *fétichisme*: a scientifically enlightened return, that is, to what, according to Comte and contemporary anthropology, had been humanity’s first form of religion.

Beyond even the *synthèse subjective*, Comte envisaged one further step to complete his system. After the syntheses of intellect and sentiments there would be a synthesis of action. The *système de l’industrie positive*, focused on work and production, would chart the growth of humanity’s *pouvoir modifactory*—that is humanity’s power to modify and perfect its own earthly milieu—a project that Comte saw culminating in such fantastic ventures as climate modification through altering the orbit of the earth and the elimination of sex from conception, linked to a cult of *la Vierge-Mère*.

Reception and Significance

While there has recently been some renewed attention to his thought, including Mary Pickering’s magisterial biography, Comte remains a rather neglected figure. Discredited for what Durkheim called “the absurdities into

which his system fell,” his influence has been disavowed even when, as with Durkheim himself, it has arguably been strong. Neither positivists nor sociologists have wanted to own him. Comte’s combination of technocratic with religious reform has repelled more than it has attracted. Karl Popper included Comte among the enemies of the open society. Herbert Marcuse linked him with the rise of the “totally administered society.” Meanwhile, grand systems building has fallen wholly out of favor, as too have grand narratives of progress.

Nonetheless, Comte’s writings, especially before the mid 1840s, left a significant imprint, and Comtean influences can be detected in many of the major currents of modern thought. In addition to positivism’s attraction for modernizing autocratic regimes in the New World at the end of the nineteenth century, these range from Baron Pierre de Coubertin’s project of the modern Olympics as a humanist festival, to Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels’s scientific socialism, to Friedrich Nietzsche’s meditations on the death of god, nihilism, and the ending of metaphysics. In France, while Comte’s system, and systematizing, was abandoned, his impact on social theory was formative. Durkheimian sociology, with its linkage to *solidarisme* and civil religion, can be seen as a liberal-Kantian correction. Historical epistemology, through Gaston Bachelard, Georges Canguilhem, and Michel Foucault, also owes a debt to Comte, as does a continuing interest in social ontology and its dismantling. Louis Althusser, whose structuralist revision of Marxism owed much to Comte’s *philosophie positive*, described Comte as the only mind worthy of interest in nineteenth century French philosophy. Whether Comte will ever be read again in the light of present history is debatable, but in the context of renewed conflicts about religion, secularism, and science, Comtean themes may regain some currency.

Andrew Wernick

See also [Althusser, Louis](#); [Bonald, Louis de](#); [Empire and Political Thought](#); [Foucault, Michel](#); [French Political Thought](#); [Maistre, Joseph de](#); [Marcuse, Herbert](#); [Mill, John Stuart](#); [Nietzsche, Friedrich](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Political](#)

[Sociology](#); [Popper, Karl](#); [Progress](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Republicanism](#); [Rousseau, Jean-Jacques](#); [Saint-Simon, Henri de](#)

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Condorcet

Condorcet

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Condorcet

A mathematician and economist brought up in the school of Francois-Marie Arouet Voltaire and Jean le Rond d'Alembert and a philosopher committed to the French Revolution, Marie-Jean-Antoine-Nicolas de Caritat, Marquis de Condorcet (1743–94) is among the most important intellectual figures of the period linking the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. His philosophical work re-elaborates the materialistic and antimetaphysical ideas of the eighteenth-century *Philosophie*, establishing them as the basis for a renewal of moral and political sciences aimed at founding the rights of man on the sensitive and rational nature of human beings while at the same time expanding the scope of the mathematical sciences and the calculation of probability in collective deliberations. In terms of a progressive conception of history that is finally formulated in *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain* (1794), his political thought during the period of the Revolution gives full form to a modern idea of the Republic, whose significant elements are (1) the rights of man interpreted in the wake of John Locke as the purpose of the political contract, (2) a representative democracy including an extensive participation of citizens, and (3) a theory of the constitution that identifies in the rights of the individual a legal limit unfringeable by sovereign power. His political rationalism, open to radical democratic reform, is unanimously interpreted by revolutionary historiography as a prescient criticism of political Jacobinism—the championing of universal principles and of a centralized republic—which was destined to succumb to the revolutionary conflict and

which anticipated elements of twentieth-century democratic constitutionalism.

His political thought during the 1770s and 1780s was directly influenced by the leading figures in French and significantly, in American culture. After studying mathematics, which gained him the appointment as Secretary of the Académie des Sciences in 1776, he became a supporter of the reform projects promoted by Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot toward the end of the 1770s. Until the fall of the *Ancien Régime*, he championed a reform of the French monarchy from the top and a legislative rationalization that included the abolition of privileges, religious tolerance, free trade promoted by the Physiocrats, and at a political level, gradual introduction of forms of representation that sought to express the voice of the nation. In the decade prior to the Revolution, he was in close contact with such fathers of the American Revolution as Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine. He urged the abolition of slavery through the *Société des Amis Noirs* and in Paris, along with Jacques-Pierre Brissot, he was an influential voice in that pro-American movement that regarded the constitutional experiences across the Atlantic and a republic of free and equal citizens as the ideal to be followed.

The events of 1789 and the start of the French Revolution saw a radicalization of his political philosophy. Elected to the Legislative Assembly in 1791, of which he became president, and once again to the Convention in 1792, he developed a political and constitutional theory that expressed the liberal language of liberty and the democratic language of equality. In the representational institutions, along with the rights of man and the extension of democracy, he now promoted the right to *secours publiques*: a de facto equality aimed at eliminating the causes of man's dependence on man without harming individual personal and economic liberties. From 1790, he was an open supporter of universal male suffrage, and his long campaign for political rights for women makes him and his wife Sophie de Grouchy forerunners in the emancipation of women; he drafted and presented to the Assembly (April 20–21, 1792) the *Projet d'Instruction publique*, which laid the foundation for the secularization of schools; he also prepared social security measures (the *caisses d'accumulation*) to protect unfortunate citizens from poverty and destitution.

The first Project for the Republican Constitution of revolutionary France, known as the Girondin Constitution, presented by him to the Convention on February 15 to 16, 1793, is largely his work and the most important product of his political ideals. This constitutional project, which interpreted democracy in radical form and strongly procedural manner, was supported by the Girondists but immediately became caught up in the political struggle that led to the Montagnards gaining control of the Convention and from there, to the Terror. The political conflict eventually also brought down the philosopher himself. He was convicted of treason by the Revolutionary Tribunal in October 1793. Forced to flee, he went into hiding, where he wrote his philosophical testament, *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain* (1794), a full expression of the eighteenth-century theories of progress before his arrest and death in uncertain circumstances in a revolutionary prison.

Gabriele Magrin

See also [Constitutionalism](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Equality and Egalitarianism](#); [French Political Thought](#); [French Revolution](#); [Political Thought of the](#); [Jefferson, Thomas](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Locke, John](#); [Paine, Thomas](#); [Progress](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Utopianism](#)

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Conservatism

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Conservatism

Conservatism is a group of political and social ideologies that promote traditional social and political institutions, gradualism in political action, and opposition to radical political and social movements.

As an identifiable international intellectual and political movement, conservatism originated in opposition to the French Revolution and was heavily influenced in its early years by Edmund Burke's essay *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, first published in 1790 (1987). After the revolution, conservatism spread throughout much of Western Europe and was influential in the ideologies of leading diplomats and intellectuals of the nineteenth century, including Klemens von Metternich, Joseph de Maistre, and Juan Donoso Cortés.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, conservatism was characterized by a preference for political rule by the established elites and aristocrats and opposed to rule by the middle classes or working classes. By the twentieth century, conservatism began to lose its particular attachment to the established aristocracy, but continued to promote rule by natural, untitled elites. In all historical periods, philosophical conservatives have expressed opposition to mass-democracy movements, fearing that democracy leads to dictatorship.

The specific policies and political programs favored by conservatives have varied significantly among differing societies and have changed over time,

depending on the nature of traditional institutions in each society. The traditional status of capitalism or monarchy or Catholicism, for example, greatly influences the nature of the society that the conservative seeks to preserve.

Today, conservatism is associated with numerous center-right and right-wing political parties throughout Europe and in Anglophone countries including the United States, Canada, and Australia. The degree to which ideological conservatism influences the political programs of such parties is a matter of dispute, however, as modern political parties and movements associated with conservatism often embrace ideological components in conflict with traditional conservatism, such as liberal economics and mass democracy.

Reaction Against Revolutions in Europe

The French Revolution and the subsequent destruction of church and royal power in France, followed by the Reign of Terror, were a source of widespread dismay among aristocrats and elites in both Europe and the United States. Even before the Terror, Burke responded to the early stages of the Revolution with his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, which condemned the Revolution on the grounds that it uprooted most traditional French institutions and was based on excessively theoretical assertions. Burke had earlier supported the American Revolution on the grounds that the Americans were seeking to preserve traditional rights and an established way of life against interference from the British Crown. In Burke's view, the French Revolution, unlike the moderate American Revolution, was radical and rootless.

The de-Christianization of France during the revolution, coupled with the destruction of the established aristocratic ruling class, alarmed other intellectuals among the aristocracy throughout Europe in the following decades.

Maistre, an aristocrat of Piedmont-Sardinia, called for the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy following the war and embodied the conservative creed of throne and altar that Maistre considered essential to maintaining a just

and lasting society. Unlike Burke, who promoted individual liberties and decentralization of political power coupled with religious freedom, Maistre was dogmatic in his support of monarchy and traditional religious institutions, going so far as to declare that citizens must respect and even love a despotic ruler. According to Maistre (“Les Soirees de Saint Petersbourg,” quoted in Viereck 2006, 132), when faced with a severe and suspicious prince,

there is no better course than resignation and respect, I would even say love, for since we start with the supposition that the master exists and that we must serve him absolutely, is it not better to serve him, whatever his nature, with love than without it?

Later European theorists, such as Juan Donoso Cortés, who supported constitutional monarchy against the liberals and socialists of Spain, were influenced by Maistre either directly or indirectly.

Klemens von Metternich, who in later decades would, perhaps unfairly, become a symbol of right-wing reaction for the European left during the nineteenth century, in fact rejected the more authoritarian and reactionary strains of conservatism found among the disciples of Maistre and embraced a doctrine of stability through peace and economic progress and a less authoritarian version of the throne and altar doctrine. Metternich, who referred to himself as a conservative socialist, urged the formation of a limited parliamentary system in Austria and recommended increases in local self-government, provided that such reforms did not lead to revolutionary changes.

The liberal and socialist revolutions of the mid-nineteenth century continued to spur conservatives toward political action and philosophical argumentation against the perceived excesses of democracy, capitalism, and revolutionary movements that were spreading across Europe.

The Syllabus of Errors, a papal document published by Pope Pius IX in 1864, represented a significant international victory for the hard-line conservatism of Maistre and Cortés and to a lesser extent the less

authoritarian conservatism of the Metternich school. The document condemned liberalism, socialism, communism, and some forms of rationalism and denied that “the Roman Pontiff can, and ought to, reconcile himself, and come to terms with progress, liberalism and modern civilization.”

Continental strains of conservatism, most typified by the works of Maistre, Cortés, Metternich, and Friedrich von Gentz, were significant in European political development, but in the centuries since the French Revolution, Burke’s brand of compromising, nonideological conservatism has proven to be the most influential and widespread form of conservatism. This significance is especially true in the English-speaking world.

Chief characteristics of conservatism that were general across most schools of conservatism prior to World War II include opposition to mass democracy, support for religious institutions, a preference for rule by aristocrats or a natural elite, and an aversion to theories of government not based on established experience.

Conservatism continued to be an influential ideology among the established elites in Europe through the twentieth century. The Congress of Vienna (1814–15), chaired by Metternich himself, was followed by nearly a century without any large-scale wars in Europe, which contributed to the stability of the conservative regimes then in place and enabled them to withstand the many liberal and socialist revolutions of the mid-nineteenth century. The success of secular democratic and socialist regimes following the end of World War I brought an end to conservative dominance in Europe.

Prudential Versus Ideological Conservatism

Conservatism can be either prudential or ideological in nature, and the two types are not mutually exclusive. Prudential conservatism assumes that institutions that are traditional are valuable in themselves and worthy of preservation. Institutions that have stood the test of time signal to conservatives that they perform an important function in the society in which they exist. The nature of these institutions can vary significantly

from society to society, and an institution that is traditional in one society, such as Parliament in the United Kingdom, may not be traditional in another society, such as in Austria. Thus, what is conservative in one society may not be conservative in another. The value of an institution is assessed by empirical observation and experience rather than through theoretical constructs. According to George E. Yoo (2007, 110), prudential conservatives also seek to avoid destroying valuable institutions through excessive change:

The presumption behind the arguments of the prudential conservative is that the social equilibrium is delicately balanced. Social institutions are inherently unstable and easily destroyed when tampered with. Prudential conservatism thus does not necessarily appeal to any socially ideal patterns of society.

Prudential conservatives historically expressed a distrust of rationalist and theoretical arguments that might lead to a devaluation of longstanding and useful institutions in society. Burke, for example, was preeminent among the prudential conservatives and was known for his insistence that no “rational man ever did govern himself by abstractions and universals.”

Ideological conservatism, on the other hand, relies at least partially on rationalist argumentation to determine the value of various institutions in society. Unlike prudential conservatives, ideological conservatives often conclude that there are in fact theoretically ideal patterns of society and that specific natural laws may exist that are applicable to all societies regardless of historical experience. Maistre, for example, employed rationalist and theoretical arguments to defend the French monarchy and the Catholic Church as indispensable in French society. Indeed, Maistre concluded that monarchy is a divinely sanctioned absolute and a superior form of government in virtually all situations. Similarly, the American John C. Calhoun regarded his views on the dangers of majority rule as applicable universally, although he wrote for a specifically American audience.

Most conservatives employ elements of both prudential and ideological conservatism, although few conservatives engage in theoretical system

building to the same extent as liberals and socialists. The degree to which one is an ideological or prudential conservative nevertheless generally falls on a spectrum between Burke on the prudential end and Maistre on the ideological end.

Nationalism and Internationalism

The degree to which nationalism has been associated with conservatism has varied from time to time and from place to place. Initially, conservatism, closely associated with Christianity in most cases, was emphatically internationalist given the nature of Christianity, especially Catholicism.

Burke endorsed mild nationalism as one value among many in his writings but denied that love of country should eclipse other values. Metternich, as an agent of Austria, a society of mixed ethnicities and religions, was naturally internationalist in his thinking, as was evident in his contributions at the Congress of Vienna. Maistre, as a Catholic monarchist, endorsed international Catholic institutions as essential to the maintenance of a just society. Aristocratic cosmopolitanism was a central component of the thinking of numerous conservatives following the French Revolution.

In what Peter Viereck calls the great reversal in conservative thought, however, conservative theorists moved from internationalist to nationalist as the nineteenth century progressed with the preponderance of conservative thought moving toward nationalist theories after 1870 in Europe. Originally associated with the middle classes and with groups radically opposed to international states such as Austria, nationalism was later invoked by liberals and socialists in diverse circumstances to bolster support for a variety of mass movements.

Conservatives initially rejected these nationalist movements, but by the second half of the nineteenth century, nationalism was employed by conservative statesmen such as Otto von Bismarck as a means of maintaining the status quo for the princes of Prussia and neighboring states, while the vehement philosophical nationalism of Maurice Barrès in France asserted the existence of a collective national soul that he claimed disallowed conservative support for individualism and internationalism.

By the twentieth century, the nationalism supported by Bismarck and Barrès was used by fascists in efforts to denounce democracy and to support racist assumptions of national superiority. Conservatism fundamentally differs from fascism, however, in that conservatism opposes mass movements and radicalism. Swiss conservative Jakob Burckhardt, for example, predicted that the antiaristocratic mass movements of the late nineteenth century would lead to terrifying militaristic authoritarianism and notably, German Catholic aristocrats such as Bishop Clemens von Galen and Claus von Stauffenberg were central figures within the few resistance movements sustained during Nazi rule in Germany.

Although the excesses of the fascist regimes of the 1940s discredited the untrammelled nationalism of earlier years, conservative political parties internationally have tended to associate themselves with nationalism since 1945. The conservative movement in the United States, for example, has traditionally supported nationalist programs such as anti-immigration measures and an aggressive foreign policy.

In Europe, the Conservative Party of the United Kingdom is associated with Euro-skepticism, although the Party is divided on the issue.

Nationalist parties in Europe such as the National Front in France and the Party for Freedom in The Netherlands tend to oppose further integration into the European Union on nationalist grounds while supporting immigration restrictions and efforts to reinforce national identity.

Relationship With Liberalism and Capitalism

Although numerous center-right and conservative political parties are associated with support for capitalism in the twenty-first century, conservatives were generally opposed to capitalism and to the philosophy of laissez-faire associated with liberalism during the nineteenth century. An American example is the antebellum proslavery aristocrat George Fitzhugh, a Virginian who compared Southern legal slavery favorably with the asserted horrors of Northern industrial capitalism.

Historian Ralph Raico has noted that classical liberalism was closely associated with the middle classes of the nineteenth century, which were in turn associated with laissez-faire and industrialization. Conservatives in Europe opposed the middle classes as the forces of liberalism and revolution. British conservative Samuel Taylor Coleridge was adamant in his opposition to the middle-class capitalists represented most completely by the Manchester Liberals of the mid-nineteenth century. In response to the Reform Act of 1832, which allowed the middle classes to vote in Parliamentary elections, Coleridge ("Table Talk," quoted in Viereck 2006, 127) declared,

You have disfranchised the gentry, and the real patriotism of the nation, you have agitated and exasperated the mob, and thrown the balance of political power into the hands of that class which, in all countries and in all ages, has been, is now, and ever will be, the least patriotic and least conservative of any.

Conservatives accused middle-class capitalists of valuing economic profit above all else and therefore of degenerating into materialism. Maistre specifically condemned economists, by which he meant liberal economists, and Metternich singled out the middle classes as being most susceptible to faulty theories of government. Bismarck opposed what he called the Manchester money-bags for their insistence on free trade.

Contrary to Coleridge's doctrinaire opposition to capitalists, however, many conservatives by the twentieth century accepted capitalism and the middle classes as acceptable players within public affairs.

Since World War II, in Europe and throughout the Anglosphere, capitalism and the middle classes have been closely associated with conservatism, with numerous center-right political parties espousing economic liberalism alongside traditionally conservative elements such as support for Christian religious institutions. The United States, lacking an indigenous aristocracy, has historically produced few conservative theorists opposed to the middle classes and capitalism.

In typical Burkean fashion, conservatism, which once regarded industrialization and middle-class political power as revolutionary innovations, eventually adopted these elements as traditional once they had become firmly established in society and thus no longer revolutionary by the early twentieth century.

The conservative embrace of capitalism illustrates Burkean conservatism's willingness to adopt institutions and ideologies once considered anathema. This openness to aspects of liberalism has not led to reciprocation from all liberals. Laissez-faire liberal Friedrich von Hayek, in his essay "Why I Am Not a Conservative," accuses conservatives of simply reacting to other ideologies and consequently embracing components of liberalism and socialism for want of any positive ideological program.

Conservatism in the United States

Whether or not conservatism has a tradition native to the United States is a matter of dispute. Because the United States lacks any influential ideologies supportive of titled aristocracy or monarchy and possesses ruling classes that are historically bourgeois and capitalist in nature, many observers of American politics, such as Louis Hartz, have concluded that American ideological traditions are predominantly liberal. The ideology that is known as conservatism in America is therefore a variety of liberalism.

American conservative Russell Kirk, on the other hand, maintains that John Adams and the Federalists of eighteenth-century America were conservatives for a variety of reasons. Specifically, they were suspicious of democracy, and they sought only to preserve English political rights that had been established following the English Civil War.

The American Revolution, according to Kirk and Viereck, was conservative and waged to preserve an existing way of life rather than to assert new political rights. Laissez-faire liberal Murray Rothbard disputes this interpretation, however, and asserts that the war itself, the removal of the loyalists after the war, and the subsequent land reforms were all revolutionary in nature.

Later Southern theorists such as George Fitzhugh and Calhoun, who defended a southern landed aristocracy as an essential component of American civilization, appear to be more easily and properly identified as conservatives.

The political movement known as the conservative movement in the United States is largely rooted in nineteenth-century liberalism although elements of traditional conservatism are found within the movement, especially in the thought of Kirk and the traditional conservatives.

The pre–World War II conservative movement, however, originated in opposition to the social democracy of the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration during the Great Depression and was characterized by laissez-faire and what is now called libertarianism, more than with what was then known in the United States as conservatism. The word *conservative* had been used by left-wing critics of the libertarian opposition groups to characterize them as reactionary and antiliberal.

Only in the 1950s did some of these same opposition groups affirmatively adopt the term conservative—to the objection of libertarians. Writing in 1961, Ronald Hamowy denied a connection between American laissez-faire ideologies and conservatism. According to Hamowy and other libertarians of the time, the new European-style conservatism supported by Kirk and other traditionalists was

the conservatism not of the heroic band of libertarians who founded the anti–New Deal Right, but the traditional conservatism that has always been the enemy of true liberalism, the conservatism of Pharonic Egypt, of Medieval Europe, of Metternich and the Tsar, of James II, and the Inquisition; and Louis XVI, of the rack, the thumbscrew, the whip, and the firing squad. (Critchlow and MacLean 2009, 67)

In spite of these objections, the conservative movement in the United States has been closely associated with laissez-faire ideology since the 1950s. Combining elements of anticommunism, nationalism, laissez-faire, and

social traditionalism, the conservative movement in the United States has long been influential within the center-right Republican Party in the United States.

Conservatism Outside the West

Conservatism as an ideology is indigenous to Europe and the West. Numerous aspects of conservatism, such as an adherence to traditional morality and a respect for established hierarchical political institutions, bear similarities to numerous political movements outside the West, although in many cases the similarities are coincidental.

Many societies, movements, and parties in the Muslim world, for example, are labeled conservative, although this is not due to any preferred connection to European institutions such as the Catholic Church. Indeed, any institution in the Muslim world that would endorse the views of theorists such as Maistre would be considered countercultural and radical. Similarly, Singapore has long been labeled conservative for its moral traditionalism and resulting social policy, including censorship of sexually unorthodox (by Singaporean standards) publications and broadcasts.

While numerous Western conservatives have integrated elements of liberalism into their ideological framework, non-Western societies, historically lacking a liberal laissez-faire tradition, are less likely than Westerners to view liberalism as potentially conservative or as part of local social and political traditions in more recent decades.

Nevertheless, nonideological prudential conservatism as a style of politics is often used outside the West by some movements and parties as a means of promoting political and social stability along with traditional morality. In many cases, however, this style of politics is more heavily influenced by local philosophical traditions such as Confucianism.

Contemporary Conservatism

Numerous center-right and right-wing parties in recent decades are built upon coalitions of nationalists, advocates of liberal economics, and advocates for traditional morality. Such parties, which include the Conservative Parties in the United Kingdom and Canada, the Republican Party in the United States, and the Liberal Party of Australia, are also often notable by their use of prudential conservatism as a style of politics.

Many observers regard the 1980s as the high point of conservative politics in the West since World War II because of the Conservative Party's electoral victory in the United Kingdom under Margaret Thatcher in 1979 and the election of Ronald Reagan in the United States in 1980. As with many conservative political movements of the late twentieth century, the Reagan and Thatcher programs were marked by a mixture of economic liberalism, nationalism, anticommunism, and social traditionalism.

The wide-ranging privatization efforts under Thatcher owe more to liberal laissez-faire ideology than to British conservatism, prompting some observers of Thatcher to label her as radical rather than as conservative. Reagan's professed economic liberalism also runs counter to the conservative label, but with both Thatcher and Reagan, their pro-Western, anticommunism, nationalism, and associations with traditional morality mark their tenures as conservative.

Today, in spite of the views held by most nineteenth-century conservative theorists, conservatism is far more closely associated in the political realm with right-wing populist parties than with Burkean conservatism or aristocratic opposition to mass democracy.

In Europe, the Danish People's Party, the Party for Freedom in The Netherlands, and the National Front in France are often regarded as both conservative and populist. These right-wing parties tend to oppose immigration, to support traditional morality, and in some cases, to explicitly support church-state alliances, as with the Danish People's Party's support for the Church of Denmark. The hard-line nationalism of many modern right-wing groups and their appeals for mass democratic support, however, separate many right-wing parties of recent decades from historical conservatism and even from contemporary adherents of Burkean-style conservatism.

Widely known theorists and politicians that can be considered historically orthodox in their conservatism have been rare in recent decades, although two Austrian aristocrats bear mentioning. In both cases, liberalism's strong influence on traditional European conservatism is evident.

The Austrian-born nobleman Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn described himself as a conservative arch-liberal and opposed to democratization, mass movements, fascism, and totalitarianism. Kuehnelt-Leddihn is notable for asserting in a variety of scholarly works that had the conservative regimes of Europe survived World War I, Europe would have avoided the totalitarianism of the 1930s and 1940s. At the same time, he accepted numerous tenets of liberalism, including natural rights and the benefits of laissez-faire, and was a columnist for publications of the American conservative movement.

Similarly, Otto von Habsburg, at one time the heir to the throne of Austria, was a conservative, a close associate of laissez-faire liberal economist Mises and a member of the liberal Mont Pelerin Society. An internationalist conservative, opponent of Nazism, and early advocate of European integration, Habsburg was a member of the European Parliament during the 1980s and 1990s, an opponent of communism, and a supporter of what he viewed as traditional European civilization.

Ryan W. McMaken

See also [Adams, John](#); [Barrès, Maurice](#); [Burke, Edmund](#); [Calhoun, John C.](#); [Coleridge, Samuel Taylor](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [French Revolution](#); [Political Thought of the](#); [Hayek, Friedrich](#); [Ideology](#); [Libertarianism](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Maistre, Joseph de](#); [Nationalism](#); [Neoconservatism](#); [Neoliberalism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Revolution](#); [Totalitarianism](#); [Utopianism](#)

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Benjamin-Henri Constant de Rebecque (1767–1830) was the son of Louis-Arnold-Juste de Constant de Rebecque, from a Swiss Protestant aristocratic family, officer in the Dutch service, and of Henriette-Pauline de Chandieu-Villars. His mother died a couple of weeks after giving birth to him, so Benjamin was initially cared for by female relatives and his father's housekeeper (and later wife) before embarking on a number of educational experiences abroad, which took him to Bavaria, Edinburgh, and Paris.

He returned to Switzerland in 1786, and shortly after he met the novelist Isabelle de Charrière, a Dutch aristocrat twenty-seven years his senior. By the standards of his life up to then, it turned out to be one of his most steady friendships, and also helped his career considerably. In 1788, he became chamberlain at the court of the duke of Brunswick, where he remained until he had to leave in 1794, following one of the many scandals (and duels) that attended his eventful life. Meanwhile, in 1789, Constant had married Wilhelmine von Cramm. The marriage turned out a disastrous failure, and an acrimoniously fought divorce ensued eventually in 1795.

His employment at Brunswick meant that Constant spent the most tumultuous years of the French Revolution in a rather parochial north-German court. Shortly after his return to Switzerland, in 1794, Constant met the most famous of his many mistresses, Anne Louise Germaine de Staël (Mme de Staël), daughter of the Swiss banker and former minister of *ancien-régime* France, Jacques Necker, and wife of the Swedish

ambassador to Paris. Constant followed Mme de Staël to Paris in May 1795 where he became a French citizen and embarked on an eventful political career. After the coup of 18 Brumaire that brought Napoleon Bonaparte to power, Constant, helped by Abbé Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès, was elected to the Tribune, from which he was expelled in 1802 for consistently resisting Napoleon's wishes. He spent the next twelve years (until the defeat of Napoleon in 1814) in exile, much of it traveling with Mme de Staël. His relationship with her deteriorated steadily during these years, especially following his secret marriage to Charlotte von Hardenberg in 1808. During this period, Constant produced some of his best-known works, including his psychological, partly autobiographical novel, *Adolphe* (written in 1806, but published in 1816).

Once the Bourbons were restored to the French throne, Constant returned to Paris and resumed his journalistic activities. Then he fell hopelessly in love with Juliette Récamier. When Napoleon escaped from Elba in 1814, it was possibly in order to be near Mme Récamier in Paris that Constant accepted his old scourge's request to serve him during the Hundred Days. Constant was the main architect of the *Acte additionnel* to the constitution of the empire during the *Cent-jours*.

After a few months spent in London following the final fall of Napoleon, Constant returned to France to become, during his last years (1817–30), a major figure in the liberal opposition to the restored Bourbons, fighting passionately for freedom of the press, separation of powers, ministerial accountability, and a representative parliamentary regime. He was elected a representative in 1819 and again in 1824, 1827, and 1830. Following the July Revolution of 1830, he was reelected to Parliament and made president of the Council of State. He died in Paris on December 8 of that year.

Among his political works a particular place is held by *De l'esprit de conquête et de l'ururpation dans leurs rapports avec la civilisation européenne*, directed against Napoleon. Written hastily after the debacle of the emperor's Russian campaign, in November to December 1813, *The Spirit of Conquest and Usurpation* was published in Hanover in January 1814. Constant developed there one of the ideas he is most famous for: that war, slavery, and military conquest belonged to an earlier phase of social

development and that in modern, commercial societies, it was *le doux commerce*, peace, and individual liberty that corresponded to the spirit of the times. This idea meant that the whole experience of France under Napoleon and his conquests was a perniciously anachronistic enterprise and doomed to failure.

The other major (and related) idea Constant is celebrated for is his famous formulation of the distinction between the liberty of the ancients and the liberty of the moderns. The best-known version is the 1819 lecture *De la liberté des anciens comparée à celle des modernes*, where Constant explained that the attempts of French revolutionaries and especially the Jacobins in the late eighteenth century to impose a regime of virtue, patriotism, and civic participation was hopelessly anachronistic, trying to revive a political model that corresponded to the social state of ancient Greek and Roman republics. Modern, advanced commercial economies imposed insuperable constraints to such a revival. But at the same time, Constant insisted on the importance of an irreducible modicum of political participation among the citizens of modern political communities, if these communities were not to fall prey to the twin dangers of excessive individualism and the despotism of Napoleon-like usurpers. Those (such as Isaiah Berlin) who paid more attention to the first part of Constant's message have read him as an ideal-typical advocate of what Berlin has called negative liberty. However, his emphasis on the need for civic vigilance and participation makes his message much more complex than a simple advocacy of negative liberty. Constant also had for decades a strong interest in the study of religions and the religious experience, which resulted in his five-volume study *De la religion* (1824–31).

Georgios Varouxakis

See also [Economics and Political Thought](#); [French Revolution](#), [Political Thought of the](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#)

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The principle of constitutionalism is an application of the principle of the rule of law to the highest organs of government. The rule of law requires that all members of society—officials and citizens alike—be governed by law so that no one may exert arbitrary power over the lives, liberty, or property of others. A society's constitution consists of laws and customary norms that establish and empower the highest organs of government, legislative, executive, and judicial. The principle of constitutionalism requires that the constitution also effectively regulate and control governmental powers to minimize the possibility of their exerting arbitrary power over citizens.

Kenneth Culp Davis (in *Discretionary Justice*, 1969) famously distinguished between three methods of controlling discretionary power: confining, structuring, and checking. *Confining* power means keeping it within defined boundaries, *structuring* it means regulating the methods or procedures by which it may be exercised, and *checking* it means ensuring that it can be reviewed by some external person or agency. A constitution can use all three methods to control the exercise of governmental powers, and each can contribute to the rule of law.

Legal and Political Constitutionalism

A distinction is often drawn between legal and political constitutionalism. Legal constitutionalism involves imposing legal limits on governmental powers, often expressed as individual rights, and charging the judiciary with enforcing them. In Davis's terminology, it relies on legally confining powers and judicially checking them. Political constitutionalism uses political mechanisms to control government: on structuring political decision making through bicameralism, the separation of powers, and federalism; on enabling the political branches of government to check and balance one another; and on requiring the accountability of the executive branch to the legislature and ultimately, to the electorate. So political constitutionalism relies mainly on politically structuring the exercise of power and accountability.

Written and Unwritten Constitutions

Most written constitutions, following the American model, embody both legal and political constitutionalism. Even if they lack a Bill of Rights that restricts legislative power, they usually entrust the judiciary with the enforcement of provisions establishing structures such as the separation of powers and federalism. But legal constitutionalism has been a much less prominent feature of the British constitution compared with more modern ones. In Britain, even the executive branch was subject to comparatively weak judicial control until the late twentieth century, and the legislature is still not subject to constitutional limits that the judiciary can enforce. The doctrine that Parliament has legally unlimited or sovereign legislative power still rests at the foundation of the British constitution. It follows that there is no aspect of that constitution that Parliament cannot change, except perhaps that it cannot restrict its own sovereign power.

A constitution can be written or unwritten, although very few examples of the latter kind still exist (they include Britain, New Zealand, and Israel). Unwritten constitutions may consist of customary laws; nonlegal norms that are generally regarded as obligatory, called constitutional conventions in Britain; rules or principles of common law; and ordinary statute law—in each case, insofar as they deal with the composition, powers, and procedures of the highest organs of government. It is more difficult for unwritten constitutions to bind government organs effectively. Customary

norms are often vague and imprecise, statute and common law can readily be altered by ordinary legislation, and effective means for enforcement are frequently elusive. Before the late eighteenth century, moral and customary norms were widely thought to limit the powers of monarchs, but they were vague and contestable, and the only means of enforcement was armed rebellion. In Britain, the powers of the monarch were eventually brought under the control of the common law and of Parliament, but only after a civil war, followed soon after by a revolution.

The founders of the United States of America invented the idea that legal limits to government could be set out in a written constitution that was difficult to amend and was enforced by an independent judiciary. They hoped that these features would mitigate, if not solve, the problems of vagueness, excessive alterability, and unenforceability. But the problem of vagueness, or at least generality, cannot be eliminated because many of the moral principles that should limit government are inherently abstract and imprecise and cannot be reduced to clear and specific rules. For example, this generality characterizes the most famous guarantees of rights in the U.S. Constitution. Its founders expected that the meaning of these principles would be gradually clarified through political debate and decision making as well as judicial interpretation. The extent to which this clarification has occurred is debatable. As for alterability, it is very difficult to strike an optimal balance. Article V of the U.S. Constitution is not alone in mandating an amendment procedure that makes it quite difficult to adjust the constitution to technological and social developments, or to changes in community values. It is widely assumed that, consequently, necessary change has had to be achieved through irresistible political movements, such as President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, and by means of creative judicial interpretations.

American, British, and Hybrid Models

The American founders did not rely mainly on the judiciary for the enforcement of their new Constitution, partly because they regarded the judiciary as the least powerful organ of government. Also, such reliance would have left unsolved the problem of how the powers of the judiciary itself would be effectively controlled. Instead, the founders relied on each

branch of government helping to check and balance the others. Although they adopted a system of separation of powers by their vesting legislative, executive, and judicial powers in different organs, the separation was not absolute: each organ was empowered to interfere to some extent with the activities of the others. For example, the president was given power to veto legislation passed by Congress and to nominate federal judges, the Senate was given power to veto the appointment of federal judges and cabinet members, Congress was given power to impeach the President and federal judges, and so on. Above all, the founders relied on the power of the sovereign people to hold their elected representatives to account, either through the ballot box or in the last resort, by invoking the ancient remedy of armed rebellion, as reflected in the revolutionary logic of the Declaration of Independence and in the inclusion of the right to bear arms in the Second Amendment of the Bill of Rights.

Throughout the world today, the British model of political constitutionalism—and more generally, the idea of legislative sovereignty or supremacy—is on the wane. The American model of constitutionalism has been adopted in most countries that have achieved independence since World War II. This model comprises a written constitution, claiming to express the will of the people, which provides for:

- Democratic elections for a bicameral legislature and (when the executive is separated from the legislature) for the head of the executive government.

- Overlapping powers that enable the various organs of government to check and balance one another.

- Guarantees of individual rights.

- An independent judiciary with (a) authority to enforce constitutional requirements, including guarantees of individual rights; and (b) exclusive authority to conclusively settle legal disputes in general.

- A requirement that the constitution can be changed, if at all, only by some special, democratic procedure that requires a broader consensus and more careful deliberation than the procedure for ordinary legislation.

These abstractly defined elements are capable of being implemented in many different ways. This fact is most obviously true of the first element: democratic elections for the legislature and the head of the executive government. For example, presidential systems are very different from parliamentary ones. Methods of checking and balancing the exercise of powers also vary greatly, and it is difficult to strike an ideal balance between disabling government from acting impulsively and oppressively and enabling it to act efficiently and when necessary, decisively. Some critics regard the American system as a recipe for policy gridlock.

Judicial independence meets with almost universal approval. It is important that legal disputes be decided by judges whose independence from political and other extraneous influences is beyond question. But it is extraordinarily difficult to formulate a workable definition of legal disputes for this purpose. In many jurisdictions, certain kinds of controversial legal questions are decided by administrative tribunals, and there may be good reasons (concerning expertise, expense, and expedition) for not referring them to courts and even for restricting judicial review of tribunal decisions. Again, various kinds of independence can be conferred on courts. At a minimum, the executive government should not be able to dismiss judges at will or penalize them by reducing their salaries, except as part of a general, nondiscriminatory reduction in public service remuneration in the interests of austerity. But should they be appointed for life or only for fixed terms? Should the executive branch be able to reward them through reappointment or promotions from lower to higher courts? Should it be able to confer nonjudicial functions on them, either in their capacity as individuals or in their official capacity as judges? Should their salaries be set by an independent tribunal? Should they be appointed only by or with the consent of such a tribunal (or perhaps existing judges)? With respect to many of these questions, it may be better to leave protection of judicial independence to political prudence and custom rather than to attempt to impose rigid legal rules.

Special democratic procedures for altering constitutions can also vary enormously, including referenda, supermajorities in the legislature, special constitutional conventions, and in federal systems, the assent of some fixed proportion of state or provincial governments, legislatures, conventions, or

electorates. Whether particularly important constitutional provisions should be permanently entrenched and unamendable (as they are in Germany and India) is a debatable question. The choice of an amending procedure obviously depends on the individual circumstances of the country concerned.

The judicial enforcement of human rights can be implemented in a variety of ways. Should only first generation or negative rights—as opposed to socioeconomic rights—be protected? Should they be protected by only a special constitutional court; through abstract, pre-enactment review of legislation; or by ordinary courts whenever issues of rights are raised in everyday litigation between parties? Should legislatures have the authority to preempt or override judicial invalidation, as in Canada? Should judicial enforcement be confined to creative statutory interpretation and declarations of incompatibility, as in Britain today?

The judicial enforcement of constitutional rights remains more controversial than the other elements of the now popular American model. A small number of political and constitutional theorists continue to resist the rights revolution that has been sweeping the globe by denying that positive rights are necessarily desirable. These contrarians concede that in some countries, they might be highly desirable or even essential for the preservation of democracy, the rule of law, or human rights, but they deny this assertion as a universal truth. Much depends on culture, social structure, and political organization. In some countries, a history of rampant corruption, populism, authoritarianism, or bitter religious, ethnic, or class conflicts may make political constitutionalism ineffectual, and judicially enforceable constitutional rights desirable. But for well-established liberal democracies, the contrarians continue to advocate political rather than legal constitutionalism on the grounds that it better respects the democratic ideal of government elected to represent the opinions and interests of ordinary people. According to this ideal, ordinary people have a right to participate on equal terms in the political decision making that affects their lives and should be presumed to possess the intelligence, knowledge, and virtue needed to do so. When the requirements of justice and human rights are the subject of reasonable disagreement, the opinion of a majority of the people or those elected to represent them, rather than of a majority of some

unelected elite such as a tiny number of judges, should prevail. On this view, the price that must be paid for giving judges power to correct the occasional clear injustice is that they must also be given power to overrule the democratic process in the much greater number of cases in which there is reasonable disagreement and healthy debate. They see this power as too high a price to pay.

Proponents of constitutionally entrenched rights warn that even democratically elected legislatures have violated the rights of individuals or minority groups, either because they have failed to properly represent majority opinion or because that opinion was swayed by ignorance, passion, or prejudice. The contrarians do not naively overlook this danger. But they trust that, in appropriate political, social, and cultural conditions, clear injustices will be relatively rare and that in most cases, whether or not the law violates someone's rights will be open to reasonable disagreement. They also trust that the dialogue and compromise that characterize democratic deliberation will, over time, foster mutual respect and tolerance among contending political and social groups. If there are deficiencies in the representative and deliberative processes of a democratic system, they advocate improving those processes to promote better representation and more careful, well-informed, and dispassionate reasoning, rather than rushing to adopt judicially enforceable rights.

Rather than having to choose between the American model of judicial supremacy in protecting rights and the older British model of parliamentary sovereignty, new hybrid models in the British Commonwealth now arguably combine the best features of both. In Canada, New Zealand, and Britain, much greater responsibility for protecting rights has been given to judges, while preserving the legislature's authority to have the last word. Canada's famous "notwithstanding" clause (s.33 of its Charter of Rights) enables legislatures to override most of the rights protected by the Charter. This feature gives poor expression to an intention to enable legislatures to override not the rights themselves, but judicial interpretations of rights that the legislature regards as erroneous. In New Zealand and Britain, judges may interpret legislation creatively to make it consistent with protected rights, but they may not invalidate it: if a rights-consistent interpretation is impossible, they may only issue a declaration that the legislation is

incompatible with specified rights. Parliaments are then legally free to choose whether or not to amend the legislation, either to override the interpretation given to it by the judges or to remedy the declared incompatibility. It is often argued that this compromise model improves the quality of interinstitutional exchange and dialogue about the protection of rights without subordinating the considered judgment of the legislature to that of the judges.

These hybrid models are experiments that may or may not work. It has been suggested that in practice, they are likely to collapse into something like the American model of judicial supremacy. But even if this concern is valid, continued experimentation with different constitutional models is desirable. Premature convergence on a single model of constitutionalism might be dangerously complacent, refusing to concede the possibility that better methods of balancing the relevant competing values can be found. Indeed, it may be desirable that some liberal democracies persist with their commitment to legislative supremacy, based on the old democratic ideal. It might turn out that they are able to protect human rights as well as those that have embraced the American model or one of the new hybrid ones without having to compromise a more vibrant democracy.

As nation-states increasingly cede political power to transnational and international organizations, such as the European Union and the World Trade Organization, constitutionalism faces the new and difficult challenge of designing mechanisms to effectively confine, structure, and check their power. It may be that traditional mechanisms designed for states will not suffice and that new paradigms are needed.

Jeffrey Goldsworthy

See also [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Federalism](#); [Liberalism](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Paine, Thomas](#); [Power](#); [Proportional Representation](#); [Rights, Civil](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Rule of Law](#); [Separation of Powers](#); [State, Theories of the](#)

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Contract Theory

Contract theory explains or justifies social or political authorities, political obligations, or various moral norms by conceiving them as the product of some sort of an agreement. Social and political theorists use the notion of a contract to understand who is bound, to what they are bound, and why they are bound. Historical and contemporary debates in contract theory consider whether being the product of an agreement is an adequate account of the scope of authority or moral obligation. Though few if any contract theorists appeal to an actual historical agreement, either tacit or hypothetical contracts play key roles in many accounts of authority, obligation, or justice.

Socrates

Plato (c. 427–347 BCE) illustrates a notable early use of contract theory in his dialogue in the *Crito*. Plato's narrative shows Socrates's friend Criton coming to Socrates's (c. 469–399 BCE) prison cell on the eve of his execution. To many contemporary readers, an Athenian jury had unjustly sentenced Socrates to death on trumped-up charges of impiety and corrupting the young. Criton attempted to persuade and help Socrates to escape, but Socrates refused. Socrates argued that he had accepted numerous benefits of Athenian society and remained a resident of the city when he had the chance to leave, so he had in effect agreed to do as the state asked—even if it meant accepting a death sentence he found

questionable. To accept Criton's offer to bribe the jailer, thus breaking the law requiring the guilty to accept their legally authorized punishment, would have, according to Socrates, served to undermine the entire system of Athenian law.

However, as a semifictionalized character in Plato's *Republic*, Socrates rejects the contract theory of Glaucon, another character, who argues that justice is whatever people decide to define it as contractually. Here, as a mouthpiece for Plato, Socrates appears to reject his own contract argument in the *Crito*, eventually arguing for an absolute conception of justice as each person doing what he or she is best at in the serving the community. Most scholars explain this apparent contradiction as simply reflecting Plato's own versus Socrates's thinking about justice and the social contract.

Thomas Hobbes

Socrates's appeal to tacit agreement illustrates how citizens might be bound to act in ways they disapprove of. In *Leviathan* ([1651] 1968), Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) took the appeal to agreement even further as the basis for his quasi-moral notions of natural law. Absent any stable social or political power, Hobbes claims human beings are in a “state of nature” that he described as a “state of war.” In life, there is “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short” (Hobbes [1651] 1968, 186). Persons would do well to find some conventional substitute for the right reason that nature fails to provide and thus leaves the natural laws of good behavior silent in the state of nature. Hobbes argued that individuals must agree to give up their rights of private judgment and freedom of action to a sovereign power whose will shall be the basis of justice and, ideally, the enforcement of such natural laws as seeking peace and honoring one's agreements. This collective act is a form of contract since agents agree with one another to accept a common sovereign power, or when threatened after the contract is adopted, they agree directly with the sovereign power itself.

Hobbes used contract theory to show that agreeing to an absolute sovereign is the only solution to prepolitical violence. He also used the contract to create the basis of moral norms, which can be summarized as a prudential version of the golden rule of doing unto others as one would have them do

unto oneself. This approach makes Hobbes not only a political-contract theorist, but in a limited sense, a moral-contract theorist as well. The limit to Hobbesian morality derives from its purely calculating quality of reciprocal—as opposed to pure—altruism, a concept more fully developed by modern evolutionary psychology and cultural anthropology.

A virtually unique limitation of the absolutism of the Hobbesian contract is the right of individuals to resist any act of the sovereign that threatens their lives. Because self-preservation is what motivated free individuals to contract away their freedoms to a dauntingly powerful sovereign, they cannot, according to Hobbes, be supposed ever to have surrendered their natural right of self-defense. Hence, scholars have noted, despite the appearance of a social contract, the citizens in effect remain in a state of nature vis-à-vis their sovereign.

Hobbes's political theory is liberal since he traces political authority and obligation to the free consent of all subjects. Indeed, Hobbes treated agreement as the basis for all authority. This position is part of his argument against the view that some persons by nature are entitled to rule over others. Hobbes maintained that any obligation must be traced to the consent of those bound.

An unusual and extreme implication of Hobbes's consensual contract comes in his account of parents' authority over children. On his view, the dominion a mother enjoys over her child rests on what a child would and must agree to. Of course, children do not and cannot actually consent in the normal sense of the term. Rather, Hobbes makes this argument to dramatize the consensual basis of all dominion. Like the adult citizen, the child consents to being ruled in the expectation of receiving protection and nurture from the authorities.

John Locke

John Locke (1632–1704) used the logic of contract to justify a far more limited government than the Hobbesian *Leviathan*. Locke's social-contract theory, as expounded in his *Second Treatise of Government* ([1679] 1960), creates a political vision from moral norms that pre-exist civil society. On

Locke's view, the state of nature is not necessarily a state of war. Some peace under the laws of nature is possible without government. But the natural condition does have its inconveniences, such as biased and unfair enforcement of the laws of nature. Locke thus argued that people agree to set up a government whose power depends on the ongoing consent of the governed. The people may rescind the power to rule if the state abuses it. Locke thereby justified a limited right of revolution that helped inspire the American War of Independence.

Locke rooted political power in the consent of the governed, so he needed to explain in what sense subjects have consented to their government, given that plainly many have never actually done so. On his view, continued residence in a state's territory amounts to implied consent to the state's rule. David Hume (1711–76) later worried that such implied consent cannot bind individuals if the costs of dissent are excessive. Hume also argued more generally against implied-consent accounts of political authority and obligation. He noted that we often think authority binds persons even if they cannot be understood to have consented to political dominion, and indeed, that we rarely even think of our obligations in terms of consent. John Simmons (b. 1950) similarly argues that implied consent is an inadequate foundation for the political authority we commonly attribute to modern states.

Because the protection of property—including life, liberty, and estate—was the main purpose of Locke's contract, citizens' use of money played a key role in justifying the proprietarian social and political contracts he advocated. By using the national currency, Locke argued, citizens tacitly agreed to the economic inequalities of a class society.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78) believed that neither Hobbes nor Locke fully considered the distorting effects of civilization on human development, corruptions featured in Rousseau's *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences* (1750) and *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* (1754). Rousseau argued that civilization is responsible for all pernicious inequalities among us, especially in wealth and power. In the *Social*

Contract ([1762] 1987) Rousseau argued that to secure freedom, human beings must create a social contract that would become the basis of a general will, conceived as the true common good that we would all voluntarily will if we clearly understood our own interests. This general will stipulates that a just society must elevate freedom, equality, and community above wealth, status, and power as the true social good. Enlightened citizens freely seek the general will and in so doing, realize their true freedom by identifying with public good. Because political representation corrupts the general will, the small community envisioned by Rousseau would be a direct democracy of all the people making their own laws. Like Locke, Rousseau argues that if government becomes oppressive, revolution is justified. He is regarded as a philosophical father of the French Revolution of 1789.

Immanuel Kant

Hobbes had held that the state was a convention based on the mutually self-interested agreement of individuals motivated to minimize conflict and achieve security. Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), however, believed that the state could not rest on people's incidental inclinations. A justified state is based on the principles of freedom, equality, and independence. Its acts constitute legitimate rule insofar as they are expressions of a public law. All citizens must be understood to agree on the public will that affirms public law, and this agreement is the original contract by which individuals establish a lawful commonwealth. But on Kant's view, this original contract is not an actual agreement; it is an idea of reason by which to understand the limits of and justification for state authority.

Kant is a political-contract theorist. He maintained that legislators must fashion laws so that they could theoretically have been the product of the united will of all citizens. A law is then unjust, on Kant's view, if it would be impossible for all people to agree to it. As does Rousseau, Kant makes clear, however, that laws can be just even if people such as they happen to be would not in fact agree to them. The purpose of law is not to secure people's happiness; it is to make possible what Kant calls a "state of right" ([1793] 1983, 78). Kant's account left little if any room for a justified right of revolution. An appeal to the original contract shows that citizens must

have given up their rights of private judgment; otherwise, the commonwealth would be in vain and it would be impossible to establish right.

John Rawls

Through the nineteenth century, contract theory appeared in some social and political theories, but it was not a prominent part of leading discussions. In the mid- to late twentieth century, however, John Rawls (1921–2002) refocused theoretical discussions. Rawls is widely credited with reinvigorating both political philosophy in general and contract theory in particular.

In Rawls's 1971 work *A Theory of Justice*, justice emerges from a social contract among persons in a fair bargaining situation he calls the original position. Such persons are behind a veil of ignorance where they know nothing about any actual distinguishing features of themselves such as race, class, sex, or religion. They are denied such knowledge because they recognize that such features are morally irrelevant and ought not to affect the choice of principles of justice. Rawls held that persons are disposed to cooperate with one another, but that they want to realize their goods—whatever those might be. Such persons then unanimously agree upon two principles of justice to govern the basic structure of society. First, all persons are equally entitled to maximal basic liberties consistent with a similar extent of liberties for others. Second, upon securing fair equality of opportunity, we can justify inequalities in social and economic positions only if these work to everyone's advantage, but especially the advantage of the least well-off.

Denied knowledge of one's particular position in society, Rawls argues, persons would agree only to principles that would work to the advantage of a generic person and would therefore agree to fair principles that will promote the advantage of all. In particular, individuals bargaining fairly would adopt a maximin strategy that would maximize the position of the worst-off since after all, behind the veil of ignorance, they do not know whether they will be among the least well-off.

In *Political Liberalism* (1993), Rawls shifted from a substantive contract of justice as fairness to a procedural approach that recognized the unrealistic nature of his earlier vision: “The fact of a plurality of reasonable but incompatible comprehensive doctrines—the fact of reasonable pluralism—shows that as used in *Theory*, the ideas of a well-ordered society of ‘justice as fairness’ is unrealistic” (xvii). Rawls argues that the principles of justice can be partially realized as the product of an overlapping consensus among reasonable persons with differing conceptions of the good. Rawls later (2001) applies the logic of contract to determine how various decent peoples might agree to a framework for international law.

David Gauthier

The contract theories of Rousseau, Kant, and Rawls all idealize the agreeing parties or the conditions of agreement. Their theories do not take persons as they are, nor do they look at actual agreement to understand political legitimacy or moral justification. Instead, their theories treat the agreeing parties as idealized versions of actual persons, either by discounting or redirecting motives to realize private good (as in Rousseau and Rawls) or by considering what persons are committed to insofar as they are free, equal, and independent citizens (as in Kant). In Rawlsian theory, for instance, the conditions of agreement are constrained by independent moral notions of fairness. By contrast, contract theories in the Hobbesian tradition do not apply independent moral notions to the agreement. Instead, moral norms arise from the agreement.

Working in the Hobbesian tradition, David Gauthier (b. 1932) offers a moral-contract theory in which we imagine what sorts of norms actual rational persons would agree to as the basis of mutually acceptable constraints on their conduct. Gauthier is particularly concerned to understand how moral norms would secure not merely our agreement, but our compliance. Gauthier thus conceives contract theory as offering a response to the moral skeptic who asks, “Why be moral?”

Gauthier’s answer involves appealing to contract theory and a theory of rationality. First, consider that there are certain benefits uniquely possible via peaceful cooperation. Each person wants to realize these benefits, and

she or he wants as much of these benefits for her- or himself as possible. But she or he also knows that all other agents have similar preferences. So while any person might prefer that everyone else agree to sacrifice her or his respective interests on her or his behalf, she or he knows such asymmetrical norms will secure neither universal agreement nor compliance. Instead, each agent offers concessions that depart from this ideal (for her or him) in order to get everyone's agreement to the norms necessary for realizing the benefits of cooperation. Gauthier calls this bargaining solution the "minimax relative concession." Each agent considers how much to concede in light of similar concessions by others. Agents would then agree only to norms that minimize the most they would be asked to give up compared to others.

Gauthier's second response to the challenge "why be moral?" is a new account of practical rationality. Gauthier argues that agents have a reason to comply with moral norms, even when at some given moment it may appear best to renege on their agreements. This honoring of norms occurs because agents best secure the benefits of cooperation by constraining their pursuit of available benefits. Agents will agree to constrain their behavior only with others who agree to do the same and who are actually disposed to constrain themselves when opportunities to do otherwise arise.

Similar to Rawls's theory, Gauthier's contract theory sees parties to the agreement as wanting to realize the benefits of cooperation. Unlike Rawls, however, Gauthier considers moral norms as emerging from—but not preceding and shaping—an agreement. Also unlike the ignorant contractors of Rawls, the parties to the agreement Gauthier describes are fully aware of their holdings, endowments, and relative positions.

Challenges to Contemporary Contract Theory

Recent critics offer several important challenges to any contract theory. First, something other than agreement may justify either our moral or our political obligations, including natural rights, natural law, and compassion for others. Second, some critics argue that hypothetical agreements are not agreements at all, begging the question of what kinds of agreements actual people would in fact be willing to make. Third, the assumption of

knowledgeable, rational, and able contractors leaves out children, the disabled, nonhuman animals, and members of future generations, who arguably deserve just treatment even if they cannot contract. Finally, some argue that contract theory would become more persuasive if it systematically incorporated mechanisms by which the specific terms of a social contract, or political constitution, could be changed to reflect new conditions, new thinking, and changed values of a people.

Andrew I. Cohen

See also [Animal Rights](#); [Communitarianism and Liberalism](#); [Community](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [General Will](#); [Hume, David](#); [Justice](#); [Kant, Immanuel](#); [Liberalism](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Locke, John](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Rawls, John](#); [Rights, Civil](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Rousseau, Jean-Jacques](#); [Rule of Law](#); [State of Nature](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Cosmopolitanism

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Cosmopolitanism

Cosmopolitanism is a diffuse philosophical tradition that, at its core, emphasizes belonging not in the polis, but in the single community of humanity, the cosmos. The Stoics were the first school of thought to develop the term *cosmopolites*—citizens of the world—in the third century BCE. However, it was not until the late eighteenth century that cosmopolitanism was revived as a term, and the first modern debate on the topic emerged. To this debate the work of Immanuel Kant was key. Seeking to sketch the conditions of a post-Hobbesian international order, wherein peace would prevail among the peoples and states of the sovereign state system, Kant developed and defended the idea of a cosmopolitan social contract. A cosmopolitan social contract, grounded in acts of human will, promises laws that not only restrain the exercise of sovereign power and thus limit the possibility of war, but also respect the rights of individuals as citizens of the world. Kant's emphasis on the relationship between law and morality—the moral community of all rational beings as both the subject and object of pacifying international laws—has exerted a strong influence on all variations of cosmopolitan thought prevalent today.

More specifically, contemporary cosmopolitan thinking, influenced by the work of Kant, can be tentatively divided into three broad categories: moral (exemplified in the work of Onora O'Neil), legal (Jürgen Habermas), and political (David Held). Although these categories are by no means a strict division—cosmopolitan arguments often identified with one or another category often cut across them—it is nonetheless important to retain this

distinction. It enables us to discern differences and similarities among otherwise diffuse strands of thinking. In particular, for moral cosmopolitans who follow Kant's insights into the universal capacity of all rational beings to experience a moral sense, the world community at the center of all cosmopolitan thinking crystallizes into a universal duty to respect and promote basic human rights and justice worldwide. Citizenship of the cosmos, then, rests on the cultivation and enforcement of moral norms and relationships according to moral cosmopolitans.

By contrast, for legal cosmopolitans, it is institutionalization and a cosmopolitan legal framework that create and consolidate the world human community. For instance, a leading proponent of legal cosmopolitanism, Habermas (2006), argues in his book *The Divided West* that the world community will be unified and pacified through the juridification of the international system. By thus reworking the constitutional aspect of Kantian cosmopolitanism, Habermas puts forward the idea of a global domestic politics—that is, a politics conducted under the framework of cosmopolitan law, implemented by global institutions (such as the United Nations), and legitimated from within national public spheres. Yet a question arises at this point. If international politics and its juridification constitute the main focus of the writings of legal cosmopolitans, then how do their arguments differ from those thinkers identified as political cosmopolitans? Legal cosmopolitans emphasize the role that international law and institutions play in the consolidation of a human political community, but they do not explicitly speak about democracy. The focus on democracy is precisely what distinguishes political from legal cosmopolitans. Political cosmopolitans such as David Held envision the democratization of the world community through the promotion of processes of participation at different levels and settings—from the local and state levels to the regional and global levels. By thus participating in decision taking about issues that transgress territorial borders, individuals exercise and give meaning to their rights as cosmopolitan citizens.

The themes of deterritorialization and juridification, along with the prioritization of common humanity, with its rights and duties, constitute a common thread among the strands of contemporary cosmopolitan thinking. This commonality is no mere coincidence. The end of the Cold War in 1989

and the apparent victory of liberal democracy (as claimed by Francis Fukuyama in *The End of History and the Last Man*, 1992) gave renewed impetus to cosmopolitan arguments and largely framed the concerns figuring at the center of the three strands of contemporary cosmopolitanism. Yet criticisms remained, ranging from the unrealistic prospects for the consolidation of a world community in the absence of world government, to the homogenizing and antipluralistic implications of privileging common humanity over cultural difference. These criticisms have cast doubts on the feasibility as well as the desirability of cosmopolitan visions. Such doubts intensified after the events of September 11, 2001, and it remains to be seen how and when cosmopolitan thinking will experience its next big revival.

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See also [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Habermas, Jürgen](#); [Humanitarian Intervention](#); [International Relations Theory and Political Thought](#); [Kant, Immanuel](#); [Liberalism](#); [Nationalism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Paine, Thomas](#); [Sovereignty, State](#); [United Nations, Theories of](#)

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Critical Theory

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Critical Theory

Critical theory is a term first used by the philosopher, sociologist, and social psychologist Max Horkheimer in an essay published in 1937 titled “Traditional and Critical Theory” to describe the various interdisciplinary approaches that emanated from within the Marxist tradition and were developed within the Frankfurt school to critique society. However, critical theory covers a host of thinkers that adopted different ways to understand the social world, so there is no overall agreed unity on what constitutes the term. The most notable of these theorists, along with Horkheimer, are the philosopher, sociologist, and musicologist Theodor Adorno and the philosopher Herbert Marcuse, constituting the first phase of development up to the 1970s, and in the second phase, the philosopher and sociologist Jürgen Habermas, the dominant figure, along with the recent contributions of the philosopher and social theorist Axel Honneth.

Despite such differences, there are certain themes that thinkers within a critical theory approach share and utilize to inform their own approaches, albeit again in different ways, to expose the repressive nature of existing society, in particular capitalism and fascism. The main thinkers they relate back to are the philosophers Immanuel Kant and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, the social and economic theorist Karl Marx, and the founder of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud. The key concepts developed from these thinkers include alienation, reification, reason, and aesthetics.

Alienation and Reification

The critique of society offered by critical theory was substantially dependent on the core concepts of alienation and reification, both developed by Marx. The pivotal event in the development of the alienation thesis came with the publication of Marcuse's essay "Foundations of Historical Materialism" in 1932. This was the first attempt to critically assess the young Marx's unpublished manuscripts on alienation, and applying this theory to contemporary society became a recurring theme within the critical theory tradition. Alienation was seen as being rooted in the productive relations that people enter into in the commodified world of capitalism that denied our common humanity. Marcuse's intervention was crucial because he argued that Marx's early writings were not an aberration that were later discarded, but the foundation of his humanism that was encapsulated in the way people try to realize their essence. Marcuse was to extend and deepen the alienation thesis in his subsequent writings as he attempted to grapple with the effect that rising living standards were having on people's ability to adopt a critical stance toward the capitalist system, resulting in his aptly titled *One-Dimensional Man* (1964). Another important development in the way critical theory used the notion of alienation was in the work of Adorno and most notably, his aphoristic masterpiece *Minima Moralia* (1951). Subtitled *Reflections from Damaged Life*, the work reflected the concern with alienated individuals not simply in relation to production, but in all aspects of their existence.

For Marx, reification was the way in which relations between people are transformed into relations between things. The term was first utilized by the Hungarian Marxist philosopher and literary critic György Lukács in his 1923 (1971) book *History and Class Consciousness*, to reflect the pervasive way in which relations between people are transformed into relations between things throughout the whole of society. Critical theorists adopted reification for their own purposes to emphasize the pervasive nature of capitalist instrumentality, as the following discussions will show.

Reason

In one sense, reason, however differently understood, can be seen as the leading concern in critical theory. In his 1937 essay, Horkheimer attacked the way reason was used instrumentally, and this theme was developed further in his collaboration with Adorno in their celebrated work *Dialectic of Enlightenment* ([1944] 1972). They argued that the Enlightenment had rightly emphasized the importance of reason against myths, superstition, and prejudice and so offered the possibility for the liberation of humankind. However, they also observed that reason's role in the development of civilization led to forms of domination involving labor, nature, science, and technology. On the one hand, instrumental reason spawned the culture industry of capitalism, whereby advertising cajoles and entices consumers to buy products they do not need. On the other hand, instrumental reason also contributed to the development of fascism, including its most barbaric form, Nazism. This historical approach to understanding reason with the interweaving of theory and practice exposed an administered world in which all relationships were commodified and reified people were treated as simple cogs in an oppressive machine, while being complicit in their own oppression.

Such an understanding of the world eventually found its most potent expression some years later in Marcuse's aforementioned *One-Dimensional Man*, which exposed how the post-World War II boom, resulting in an advanced technological society, had integrated workers into the capitalist system and nullified their opposition to it through relative affluence and the ability to buy an endless procession of consumer goods. Reason had therefore succumbed to a repressive world of technological rationality in which critical thinking was seriously undermined and affluent alienation predominated.

Adorno took this critical approach to the use of reason even further in his pathbreaking work *Negative Dialectics* ([1966] 1973), in which he further developed the critique of reason from his earlier work with Horkheimer. To combat the co-optation of reason, Adorno posited negative dialectics as a way to subject any critique to its own critique. For Adorno, negative dialectics was an ongoing process of reflexive questioning that can never come to rest. It posits nonidentity thinking against identity thinking. Identity thinking attempts to subsume particular objects under general

concepts, whereas nonidentity thinking exposes disparities and fluidities in the critical thinking process that can produce authentic change. Adorno therefore preferred to use the term *constellation* to conceptualize moments of disparity and contradiction. Adorno's negative dialectics calls into question the so-called progress of reason in formulations such as "no universal history leads from savagery to humanitarianism, but there is one leading from the slingshot to the megaton bomb." In contrast, Habermas, while also being aware of the instrumental nature of reason produced by capitalism, gave a far more positive account of the role of reason in terms of the ability of humans to act rationally and autonomously, particularly in his *Knowledge and Human Interests* ([1968] 1971). In his most influential work, *The Theory of Communicative Action* (1984), Habermas attempts to show how language and reasoning are crucial for human interaction and can serve as the basis for understanding and critiquing a host of political and ethical issues.

Psychoanalysis

Another important development in critical theory was the attempt to integrate the psychoanalytical theories of Freud with Marxist ideas to analyze the relation between the individual and society. Although this fusion originally initiated with Horkheimer, it was developed more extensively from the 1930s, first in the early writings of the psychoanalyst and social psychologist Erich Fromm and subsequently in the work of Marcuse, resulting in his main contribution in this area, *Eros and Civilization* ([1955] 1966), followed by Habermas, particularly in his *Knowledge and Human Interests* (1968). Although Fromm was hostile toward using the term critical theory, his insights in this area did inspire the other theorists, especially Marcuse, to rethink the relationship between Freud and Marx. Fromm began by adopting Freud's insights to argue that childhood experience had a crucial impact on how people develop as individuals. Fromm argued, following Freud, that sexual and survival instincts are at the basis of this development and are pivotal in understanding the human psyche. In addition, he endorsed Freud's view that people had to be comprehended not only individually, but also socially. However, Fromm contended that Freud did not give a convincing account of this social aspect of the individual. He maintained that it was only with

Marx and his emphasis on how individuals are embedded in social structures that a more sophisticated theory of human development could arise. Fromm then began to distance himself from Freud's theories and eventually, in 1938, rejected his theory of instincts, much to the dismay of Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse. Against Fromm, Marcuse reaffirmed the importance of Freud's theory of the instincts by showing how the performance principle, capitalism's version of Freud's reality principle, serves to repress our basic drives instead of giving them fuller and freer expression. Marcuse sees this liberation and fulfillment of human essence occurring through the life-affirming quality of Eros against the death instinct, or *Thanatos*.

Habermas turns away from this psychoanalytic strain in the development of critical theory by featuring the problem of distorted communication in his own theory of communicative action through language. Habermas rejected Freud's theories as an unnecessary hindrance in this communicative process because of their focus on human frailty rather than on the conditions that can be created for human communication. By swapping Freud's psychoanalytic approach for the progressively developmental cognitive psychologies of Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg, Habermas completed the divorce between critical theory and psychoanalysis in the 1970s.

Aesthetics

Adorno brought critical theory to bear on aesthetics in his essay "Commitment" (1962) and with his posthumously published *Aesthetic Theory* ([1970] 1997). For Adorno, committed art exposes the false and fetishistic character of supposedly apolitical artworks that serve to titillate and thereby distract us from the clash of real interests in society. By becoming independent of market forces, such revelatory artworks attack the status quo. In *Aesthetic Theory*, Adorno enquires into the truth content and exceptional status of authentic, autonomous art, validating the fragmented style of the modernist art of composers such as Arnold Schoenberg, painters such as Paul Klee and Pablo Picasso, and writers such as Samuel Beckett, Franz Kafka, and Marcel Proust. For Adorno, such modernist art attempts to break through the reification and instrumentalism of capitalist society and in so doing, offers a deeply critical perspective on reality that reveals

possible moments of redemption. An appropriate pessimism makes people question the possibility of complete spiritual fulfillment through art, but authentic art can offer us the hope of partial fulfillment—reflecting its utopian quality. Indeed, for Adorno, redemption lies not in politics or in some social movement, but in art, a controversial stance that took critical theory away from practical revolts against the system. Marcuse's *The Aesthetic Dimension* (1977) pursued this line of argument, but with a broader perception of art that extended the possibility of its emancipatory power.

Critical Theory's Relevance Today

In all its forms, critical theory seeks to expose the bankruptcy of ideologies that serve to justify an oppressive status quo. Its reflexive nature, constantly probing and questioning even its own principles, is a testament both to its enduring analytical powers of social critique. It thus remains a viable research program to expose and undermine the reification and alienation still present throughout the world. Beyond Habermas's emphasis on discursive ethics, a new turn has also been offered in the work of Axel Honneth, in works such as *The Struggle for Recognition* (1992) and *Disrespect* (2000). Honneth is concerned with reaffirming and developing further the normative foundations of critical theory by focusing on how people strive for social recognition but experience disrespect due to the practices and institutions of society. By contrast, authentic recognition lies at the heart of a critique of contemporary society and can overcome those tendencies that would seek to nullify it.

Critical theory continues to stand as a powerful framework within which to critique the reifying and alienating tendencies of the societies of today.

Ian Fraser

See also [Alienation](#); [Civil Society](#); [Frankfurt School](#); [Freud and Social Theory](#); [German Political Thought](#); [Habermas, Jürgen](#); [Ideology](#); [Lukács, György](#); [Marcuse, Herbert](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Psychoanalysis and Political Thought](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Massimo Verdicchio Massimo Verdicchio

Croce, Benedetto

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Croce, Benedetto

Benedetto Croce was born in a family of wealthy landowners, February 25, 1866, in Pescasseroli, Abruzzo, but the family was from Naples, and this is where Croce lived the length of his long life, which ended in 1952. Croce lost both parents and a sister in the earthquake of Casamicciola in July 1883. Only another brother survived, Alfonso, who became the administrator of the family estate.

Croce and his brother were raised in Rome by an uncle, Silvio Spaventa, whose brother was Bertrando Spaventa, the major representative of the political right. After studying law for a while, Croce preferred to spend his time in libraries and listening to Antonio Labriola, whom he had met in the Spaventa household, and his lectures on Marxism. Disenchanted with university life and not attracted by the political life of the capital or interested in a career as diplomat as Spaventa would have liked, he returned to Naples in 1886. In the early years, he devoted himself to the study of the history and traditions of Naples and wrote works of some importance such as the edition in 1891 of Giambattista Basile, *Lo Cunto de li Cunti* (The Tale of Fairy Tales); *I teatri di Napoli* (The Theatres of Naples), and others on the history of Naples and the Spanish presence in the city during the Renaissance. For Croce, however, this period was not memorable; he called his work mere erudition and of little importance.

Croce dispensed first with the Marxist ideas that had occupied him during his stay in Rome and in his encounter with Antonio Labriola. The subject

occupied him from 1895 to 1900 and resulted in the publication of *Materialismo storico ed economia Marxista* (Historical Materialism and the Economics of Karl Marx 1900) in which he dismisses Marxism as just another approach to history. Although he believed Marx to be a better reader of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel than most Hegelians, he rejects his claim that theory can generate political action. Marx's socioeconomic theories reveal, rather, their dependency on a precise universe of values that are not scientifically verifiable.

Aesthetic (1902), Logic (1908)

Croce's lifelong meditation on history begins with the essay of 1893, "History Reduced Under the General Concept of Art." The essay consolidates his early erudite work of things Neapolitan but formalizes it by placing history with art and away from science because history "reproduces the particular in its concreteness" and narrates facts while science "looks for the general and works through concepts." The turning point, however, is the *Estetica* (Aesthetic) of 1902 (1990) in which Croce defines the essence of the aesthetic as symbol and identical to language, stated in the title of the work, *Aesthetics as the Science of Expression and of the Linguistic in General*. The task of the philosopher, then, is to differentiate the aesthetic from the pseudoaesthetic, the symbol from allegory. The separation has implications for history since one of the major complications that result is the correct differentiation of art from what is not art and therefore, art from history. It is only with the *Logic* of 1908 that Croce solves the problem by moving the concept of history from under the general category of art to philosophy by identifying history and philosophy: "I am claiming that history is philosophy, in fact, that history and philosophy are the same thing."

History

Croce defines his newly developed concept of history concurrently with his definition of poetry. In *La poesia* (Poetry), which can be considered his last major treatise on aesthetics, Croce attempts to separate the aesthetic from the pseudoaesthetic by relocating the latter under the category of literature.

A similar distinction is at work in the three major works he devotes to history: *Teoria e Storia dell Storiografia* (Theory and History of Historiography 1917), considered the fourth part of his philosophy of spirit (with *Aesthetics*, *Logic*, and *The Philosophy of the Practical*); *La Storia Come Pensiero e Come Azione* (History as thought and action) (1938); and the *Character of Modern Philosophy* (1941). In these works, the identity of history and philosophy is defined as absolute historicism and becomes the historical ideal that Croce upheld and opposed to fascism in the name of liberty.

Massimo Verdicchio

See also [Hegelianism](#); [Historicism](#); [Italian Political Thought](#); [Labriola, Antonio](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Darwinism And Social Darwinism

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Darwinism and Social Darwinism

Social Darwinism can be defined as the application of Charles Darwin's theory of biological evolution through natural selection to human psychology, behavior, culture, and history. It is controversial, with scholars disputing its precise meaning, its connection with Darwin's own ideas, and its role and significance in social and political thought. Moreover, Darwinism has been modified during the twentieth century due to advances in biology and related sciences, and these modifications have influenced Social Darwinism. It is, therefore, important to understand Darwinism as it was initially formulated in Darwin's *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* in 1859 (1963) and the different ways it was interpreted by social theorists and ideologues until the end of World War II. Modern Social Darwinism likewise needs to be located within the context of twentieth-century developments in Darwinian evolutionary theory.

Evolution Through Natural Selection

Darwin's theory consists of a series of interlinked propositions. First, organisms inherit characteristics from their parents, but exhibit small inheritable differences. Second, organisms reproduce at a rate greater than can be sustained by existing resources. Third, this generates a struggle for existence as organisms compete for resources. Fourth, biological and behavioral variations that improve an organism's chances of survival and reproduction will gradually spread through the population. (The struggle for

existence selects useful traits, analogous to the artificial selection practiced by stockbreeders and horticulturists for producing new strains and varieties.) Fifth, the cumulative effects of natural selection over long periods of time account for the emergence of new species and the extinction of others.

Darwin's theory contained a number of ambiguities that made it a looser, more eclectic theory than it became during the twentieth century. Two are particularly important for understanding Social Darwinism. First, although Darwin believed selection acted on individual organisms, he sometimes argued that selection operated on groups, and many of his supporters favored various forms of group selection. Second, Darwin could not explain how variations occurred—genetics was not established until the early twentieth century. The French naturalist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck had claimed that variations occurred because organisms acquired new traits in their efforts to adapt to their environments. Darwin was critical of this theory, but many evolutionists accepted it as a mechanism complementing natural selection, and Darwin eventually acknowledged some role for the inheritance of acquired characters.

Early Social Darwinism

Darwin's theory is underpinned by the belief that all nature is governed by fixed laws; hence, human biology had also evolved by natural selection from a prehuman ancestry. Social Darwinism takes an additional step, arguing that human history, psychology, and culture have also evolved through natural selection. Darwin endorsed this view in his *The Descent of Man* ([1871] 1981) and in *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* ([1872] 1998), but his notebooks show that he had held it for many years before the publication of the *Origin*. It is important to recognize, however, that endorsing Darwin's theory of biological evolution does not necessarily entail support for Social Darwinism.

Darwinism rapidly became both influential and controversial, as people grappled with the implications of human culture and behavior being governed by the struggle for existence and the “survival of the fittest”—a phrase coined by the influential philosopher Herbert Spencer and adopted

by Darwin from the fifth edition of the *Origin* (1869). Spencer argued that primitive humans were organized for warfare, but as societies became larger and more complex, warfare was gradually replaced by economic competition as a selective mechanism. Although this competition was peaceful, it was as rigorous as warfare in selecting the fittest individuals. Spencer argued that it was vital for evolutionary progress that individuals were subjected to the discipline of market forces and competition, which required a state limited to the functions of protecting individuals from crime and foreign aggression. He opposed state policies for improving welfare and living conditions because he believed they relieved individuals from the responsibility of supporting themselves in the struggle for survival. Yet Spencer also passionately opposed militarism and imperialism as symptoms of evolutionary regression because they reverted to the morality of earlier stages of evolution when warfare and conquest were the norms.

Some Social Darwinists, however, did consider warfare and conquest to be necessitated by the struggle for existence because the earth's resources were limited, and this limitation would produce conflict among groups—for example, among tribes, nations, or races. Racial conflict in particular has become closely associated with Social Darwinism, although the idea preceded Darwinism. Initially a loose term, race gradually became identified with biological characteristics (e.g., skin color), and races were ranked along a scale of putative inferiority and superiority with white races as the most advanced. Social Darwinism was appropriated by many racial theorists who believed it conferred scientific validity on their conceptions of a world governed by incessant racial conflict with “superior” races constantly menaced by “lower” races who, through sheer numbers or by racial mixing, threatened the survival of the former. This message was emphatically delivered in the publications of the French Social Darwinist, Georges Vacher de Lapouge (e.g., in his *Les Sélections sociales* [1896] and *L'Aryen* [1899]). Though adamant that the “Aryan” race was superior to all others, Vacher de Lapouge believed it was doomed to extinction in inevitable and imminent racial warfare unless draconian eugenic measures were instigated to maintain its racial purity.

The eugenics and racial hygiene movements that proliferated during the early part of the twentieth century articulated similar concerns, which were

closely linked to Social Darwinism. Declining birth rates among the middle classes in the industrial nations provoked fears of racial decline and vulnerability in the struggle with other nations for markets and resources. Measures were advocated to encourage the breeding of what they considered the fittest members of society and to prevent the proliferation of the unfit—a heterogeneous category that included criminals, vagrants, alcoholics, the congenitally sick and mentally ill, and sometimes the entire working class. Perversely, modern civilization—with advances in medicine and humanitarian concern for the indigent and infirm—had produced a contra-selection favoring the unfit over the “superior” members of society. The healthy consequences of natural selection should be restored by measures aimed at encouraging the breeding of the fit and preventing the reproduction of the unfit, the latter encompassing segregation, sterilization, and in certain versions, elimination. In these forms of Social Darwinism, fitness was no longer identified with reproductive success but with preconceived ideas of superiority deriving from class and ethnic prejudices.

Eugenics and Social Darwinism were combined with horrendous consequences in Nazi Germany between 1933 and 1945. Adolf Hitler argued that human existence was dominated by the need for food to preserve the individual and the need to procreate to preserve the race. Since resources were finite, there ensued a relentless struggle for existence between races, and the victors were those who maintained the purity of their blood. Since racial characteristics were biologically determined and unalterable by socialization, racial purity could only be maintained by eliminating the sick and the morally unacceptable members of one’s own race, preventing mixing with lesser races, and exterminating the most inferior, most notably the Jews. The Nazi policies of warfare, conquest, euthanasia, and genocide were justified in these terms.

However, Social Darwinism was also used to oppose doctrines of racial conflict. In 1863, an American clergyman, Charles Loring Brace, published *The Races of the Old World. A Manual of Ethnography*, which insisted that although races had evolved through natural selection, race relations were not necessarily antagonistic and racial differences could not be interpreted in terms of superiority and inferiority. Brace challenged prevailing racial stereotypes and strictures against the mixing of races by combining

Darwinism with Lamarckian notions about the role of the environment in evolution, insisting that social structures and behaviors could play a powerful role in influencing the fortunes of ethnic groups. In America, mulattos, Negroes (as African Americans were then usually termed) and Native Americans were declining due to the predatory and discriminatory actions of whites and the effects of alcohol, drugs, tobacco, diseases, and the destruction of game as the causes, rather than any innate inferiority. All races could interbreed, and mixed races were not necessarily inferior, physically or mentally. Blacks could live peacefully with whites, and the American Negroes would benefit from the abolition of slavery. Brace's version of Social Darwinism established an optimistic and humanistic picture of race relations that contrasted sharply with the views of Vacher de Lapouge and Hitler.

It is misleading, therefore, to conflate Social Darwinism with particular ideologies such as racism, eugenics, and apologies for predatory capitalism. Indeed, from its inception it was very closely connected with radical and reform movements such as feminism, pacifism, and socialism. Many socialists regarded Darwinism as the scientific foundation of their theory, and it has been argued that for a time Darwinism was integral to late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century socialism. Generally committed to the goals of peace and equality, socialist thinkers accommodated the struggle for existence by arguing that it had evolved, with capitalist competition as its most virulent but final manifestation. For some theorists, selection now acted on the brain, with the result that competition took place in the realm of ideas—in art, technology, science, and morals. Others, such as the German socialist August Bebel (whose enormously popular *Woman in the Past, Present and Future* [1879] had gone to fifty-three editions by his death in 1913), accepted that the struggle for existence was endemic throughout nature but that humans had evolved their rational faculties to the point where they were now capable of controlling their environment. Socializing the means of production, eradicating poverty, and promoting equality would remove the threat of overpopulation that engendered the survival of the fittest.

Bebel also used an evolutionary argument for the emancipation of women. Among early humans, the sexes were equal, but the periodic dependency of

women on men during pregnancy became transformed into permanent subjugation. The putative mental and physical inferiority of females was, therefore, not natural but was the result of social conditions of exploitation and oppression and the lack of education and occupational opportunities. These conditions would be eradicated by socialism, removing the inequalities between the sexes. A similar argument was advanced by the first French translator of Darwin's *Origin*, Clémence Royer, in her *Origine de l'homme et des sociétés* (1870). Royer was a committed feminist prior to becoming acquainted with Darwin's work but was quick to use Darwinism to support equality for women and liberal reforms. Yet although she believed that sexual inequality was the product of outmoded and unjust social practices, both in the *Origine* and her provocative preface to her translation of Darwin's *Origin* (1862), Royer insisted that racial and class inequalities were biologically determined and endorsed eugenics.

Darwinism, in addition to providing important elements of reformist, socialist, and feminist thinking during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, also inspired a pacifist body of thought that has been described as a peace biology. Its practitioners often argued that warfare was contra-selective, destroying vigorous young men and leaving reproduction to those unfit to fight, a perspective that was widely held among pacifists. It is misleading, therefore, to identify Social Darwinism with apologetics for unregulated capitalism, imperialism, militarism, or racism because it was employed by thinkers from across the ideological spectrum.

Modern Darwinism

Although Darwin's theory constitutes the foundations of modern evolutionary theory, it has been modified during the course of the twentieth century. After experiencing something of a decline during the first two decades of the twentieth century, Darwinism was revived between the late 1920s and early 1940s by a synthesis with genetics and discoveries in paleontology. Subsequent developments—the discovery of the structure of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) and major advances in microbiology, new mathematical tools, computer simulations, and data from the study of animal behavior and the fossil record—reinforced natural selection as the mechanism of evolution.

These developments also boosted the focus upon individual organisms and genes as the units of selection, while group theories of selection became less popular. Evolutionary fitness became defined as the ability of an organism to pass its genes into the next generation. Hence, the unconscious goal of each organism is to maximize the number of its genes in the next generation. Fitness is defined by the degree of success in achieving this goal. This theory was widely popularized by Richard Dawkins's book *The Selfish Gene* (1989), which argues that individuals are genetically programmed to be selfish. This theory does not mean that genes cannot be overridden, but humans must be taught to be altruistic. Some eminent biologists, however, insist that in addition to the microlevels of gene and organism, selection can operate at the macro-evolutionary levels of groups and species and that evolution, far from being gradual and continuous, consists of periods of stability punctuated by bursts of rapid change. The details of these debates are beyond the scope of this entry, so the focus will be confined to gene selection, which has provided the inspiration and theoretical scaffolding of modern Social Darwinism.

Modern Social Darwinism

Social Darwinism fell into such disrepute after World War II as a result of its association with Nazism and racism that some historians pronounced it dead. In fact, Social Darwinism, though not widespread, persisted throughout the postwar period but was dramatically revived from the mid 1970s with the emergence of the disciplines of sociobiology and evolutionary psychology. Many of their practitioners deny that they are Social Darwinists because they are opposed to racist doctrines and unmitigated economic exploitation, but they actually subscribe to the defining premise of Social Darwinism, namely that Darwinian theory can be applied to human psychology, behavior, and culture.

These disciplines utilize theories of gene selection to argue that behavioral and psychological traits will evolve and persist if they enhance survival and reproduction. Rape, for example, has been explained as an evolved mating strategy of poor, powerless men who, denied access to women, unconsciously use it as a desperate means of perpetuating their genes. Homicide and assault have been interpreted as the consequences of

aggressive impulses that have evolved due to their success in the acquisition of resources and mates. The founder of sociobiology, Edward O. Wilson, in *On Human Nature* (1978), and evolutionary psychologist David Buss in his *Evolutionary Psychology* (2008) regard the division of labor between men and women (the former as breadwinners, the latter as child raisers and homemakers) as universal and natural, reflecting real psychological, genetically based differences between men and women rather than culturally determined roles.

These theories have also been applied to politics. Albert Somit and Steven Peterson, in *Darwinism, Dominance and Democracy* (1997), maintain that the existence of dominance hierarchies in many animal societies can be explained by the benefits they confer in establishing predictability and social stability, which in turn enhance the reproductive success of members of the group. Such hierarchies have then been appealed to explain the infrequency of democracy throughout human history. Warfare has also been depicted as a universal feature of all societies throughout history, undertaken to acquire resources, thereby augmenting the reproductive success of the victors.

Sociobiology and evolutionary psychology have attracted a great deal of criticism. Opponents have challenged their theories, the evidence used to support them, and their alleged social and political implications. The practitioners of these disciplines have been attacked for presenting phenomena such as sexual differences and homicide as biologically rather than culturally determined, thus ignoring the marked variations in murder rates and the position of women displayed by different societies and even within the same society over time. They have sometimes been accused of legitimating sexual and class inequalities and of implicitly denying the possibility of social change and political reforms by depicting human behavior, beliefs, and practices as fixed, as the product of innate, genetically programmed predispositions.

Modern Social Darwinists reject these criticisms, insisting that genetic predispositions are often easier to change than those induced by socialization: after all, people contravene their natural proclivities whenever they use contraceptives. Feminists who support evolutionary psychology,

such as Griet Vandermassen, in her *Who's Afraid of Charles Darwin?* (2005), argue that a knowledge of the ways in which our minds and behaviors have been shaped by evolution is a prerequisite for changing them.

Despite the controversies it has aroused since its appearance, the enduring appeal of Social Darwinism derives from its persuasive and accessible accounts of human nature, history, and society that claim the authority of science. Its persistence suggests it is likely to remain important in modern culture, while its history indicates that it will continue to be modified by developments in Darwinian evolutionary theory.

Michael Hawkins

See also [Empire and Political Thought](#); [Environmentalism](#); [Ecology](#); [and Political Thought](#); [Fascism](#); [Feminism](#); [Genocide](#); [German Political Thought](#); [Human Nature](#); [Theories of](#); [Nietzsche](#); [Friedrich](#); [Psychoanalysis and Political Thought](#); [Spencer](#); [Herbert](#); [War and Political Thought](#)

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Paul Le Blanc Paul Le Blanc

Democratic Centralism

Democratic centralism

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Democratic Centralism

Democratic centralism was a term widely associated by Cold War anti-Communists with the alleged totalitarianism of Russian revolutionary Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. Political scientist Alfred G. Meyer's influential *Leninism* described it as Lenin's ruse for imposing his own will in the revolutionary party since "all discussion was suspect to him, because it was a waste of time and because it might threaten the unity of the party in action." In a similar vein, J. Edgar Hoover asserted in *Masters of Deceit*: "Democratic centralism is the basic principle of communist organizational structure—a term meaning, in actual practice, simple, naked, and unadulterated dictatorship." This is how the term is still commonly understood.

Actually, the term arose in the left wing of the German labor movement in the 1870s, according to Leonard Schapiro's *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union*. German socialism's uncompromisingly democratic Rosa Luxemburg, describing the German Social-Democratic Party as "the most enlightened, most class-conscious vanguard of the proletariat," called for what she described as "social-democratic centralism" or "the 'self-centralism' of the advanced sectors of the proletariat."

Within the Russian Socialist Democratic Labor Party (RSDLP), the breeding ground of Lenin's Bolshevik faction, his factional adversaries—the Mensheviks—first advanced the term. A 1905 Menshevik resolution asserted that "the RSDLP must be organized according to the principle of

democratic centralism,” that “actions affecting the organization as a whole . . . must be decided upon by all the members of the organization” and that “decisions of lower-level organizations [such as a party local] are not to be implemented if they contradict the decisions of higher organizations [such as a national convention].”

A later Bolshevik resolution, “recognizing as indisputable the principle of democratic centralism,” called for “the broad implementation of the elective principle,” adding that “while granting elected centers full powers in matters of ideological and practical leadership, they are at the same time subject to recall, their actions are given broad publicity, and they are to be strictly accountable [to the membership] for these activities.” Lenin summarized democratic centralism as “freedom of discussion, unity of action.” He felt that the revolutionary party “must be united, but in these united organizations there must be wide and free discussion of party questions, free comradely criticism and assessment of events in Party life.”

Knowledgeable historians concur with Moshe Lewin’s description in *The Making of the Soviet System: Essays in the Social History of Interwar Russia* (1985) of the Bolshevik party by 1917 as “a legal, democratic mass party” with a strong and critical-minded leadership layer, “well-connected with its rank and file and its following in the factories and barracks,” who sometimes differed with Lenin’s positions. If Lenin’s views were to prevail, he had to work through the normal procedures of party institutions to gain majority support—and more than once he was on the losing side of a debate.

After the Russian Revolution of 1917, however, and particularly in the face of the terrible calamities of 1918 to 1921 (foreign invasions, economic collapse, and a brutalizing civil war), the term came to be interpreted in increasingly authoritarian ways, particularly as the Bolshevik party, renamed the Communist Party, established a one-party dictatorship—presumably as an emergency expedient, but one that became permanent. Particularly with Lenin’s death in 1924, and the crystallization of a bureaucratic and authoritarian leadership under Joseph Stalin, the democratic elements of the concept were ruthlessly suppressed.

Stalin's summary of Lenin's theory of the party is consistent with the drive toward dictatorial power. He asserted that Lenin's theory showed "that the dictatorship of the proletariat may be complete only if it is led by a single party, the Communist Party; and . . . without iron discipline in the Party, the tasks of the dictatorship of the proletariat to crush the exploiters and to transform class society into socialist society cannot be fulfilled." With this approach, the democratic element involved rank-and-file discussion of how best to implement decisions made by the central leadership. This revision became the most influential conception in the mainstream of the Soviet and European communist movement from the 1930s onward.

Democratic centralism also became a key element in the thought and practice of Chinese communist revolutionary Mao Zedong, beginning in the 1920s, two decades before the Communist Party of China, led by Mao, came to power in 1949. Like Lenin, Mao took seriously the democratic component of democratic centralism in his speeches to the Party and in his policies in the Chinese countryside, where his peasant support helped him overcome the material advantages of Chiang Kai-Shek's Nationalists, supported by the United States.

For instance, in his 1927 speech "On the Rectification of Incorrect Ideas in the Party," Mao (1953) argued both that "the leading body of the Party must give a correct line of guidance" and that "inner-Party criticism is a weapon to fortify the Party's organization and increase its fighting capacity" (7, 9). As a cofounder with Lenin of the concept of "political correctness," Mao nevertheless urged his comrades to speak their minds openly in Party meetings without fear of retribution, although once a decision was made, they were expected to show Party discipline and toe the Party line in public. China scholars disagree about whether the violent excesses of the Mao's later Cultural Revolution (1966–76) reflected or contradicted his earlier policy of democratic centralism.

Paul Le Blanc

See also [Authority](#); [Chinese Cultural Revolution](#); [Chinese Marxism](#); [Communism](#); [Varieties of](#); [Chinese Cultural Revolution](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Lenin and Leninism](#); [Mao Zedong](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Planning](#); [Russian](#)

[Revolution, Political Thought of the](#); [Stalin and Stalinism](#); [State, Theories of the](#)

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Rebecca Kingston Rebecca Kingston

Democratic Theory

Democratic theory

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Democratic Theory

Given the contested nature of democracy as a concept, it might be suggested that it is better to speak of theories of democracies than democratic theory per se. Yet, on close examination there is a certain core of continuity in the debates on democracy in contemporary political theory, not only in the positive resonance of the idea of democracy, but also as a set of debates that revolve around varying triangulations, interpretations, and weightings of three core features of democracy: participation (or the question of institutional design and how the popular will can be identified, voiced, and channeled), accountability of government (or the question of legitimacy and how the practice of governance on an everyday basis can be made accountable), and equality (or the issue of what shared status, opportunities, and/or recognition is required for participation to be meaningful).

Justifications for Democracy

The question of democracy versus nondemocracy may appear to be largely settled in theory, as long as one accepts that democracy is the one form of regime design and practice that instantiates both broad, meaningful, consultative mechanisms and legally enforceable protections for minorities. From the perspective of practice and history, democracy appears as the outcome of a process of contestation against the tendency of elites and established public authorities to concentrate and abuse their power. In

theory, more positive justifications include the arguments that popular judgment in relation to public policy, if institutionalized thoughtfully, can often be of better quality and less corrupt than the judgment of the few (e.g., Aristotle's *Politics*, Niccolò Machiavelli's *Discourses*, John Locke's *Second Treatise*, the Marquis de Condorcet's *Probability of Majority Decisions*); that collective self-rule is the best, if not the only, way to ensure political liberty as autonomy (e.g., Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Social Contract*); and that democracy has the best potential as a regime to ensure recognition of the dignity of all as a minimum requirement of political justice, and even to promote global peace (e.g., Immanuel Kant's *Perpetual Peace*).

The first well-documented practice of democratic governance is that of ancient Athens in the fifth century BCE, and because of its primacy, it has become a continuous reference in discussions on democracy, though it remains subject to a great deal of interpretative dispute (e.g., Josiah Ober 1998; Mogens Hansen 1991). Nonetheless, Athens is regarded as having a somewhat paradoxical relationship to democracy. The citizens of Athens were granted a great deal of legislative power and influence in the determination of policy, but there was no possibility of citizenship for women, children, slaves, and anyone not born of Athenian parentage. Faced with the question of how to design modern democratically inspired institutions in an age of commerce and larger states, theorists of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, such as Benjamin Constant, developed a theoretical defense of representative democracy. The general thrust of the ideas was to allow for shallower expressions of popular participation than was the case in ancient Athens, where being a citizen was almost a full-time job, while widening the eligible public and repudiating exclusionary and oppressive policies associated with ancient practice.

Democracy as a Question of Popular Participation and of Institutionalizing Representation

In modern democratic theory, debates surrounding participation focus on the general question of how best to structure and institutionalize popular input and on more specific questions of how to conceptualize and organize democratic representation. Stances on the issue of institutional design in

democracy cover a broad spectrum and reflect differing concerns over the potential weaknesses of granting political powers to a vast public. On the one hand stand those theorists who are somewhat wary of popular judgment and who therefore defend perspectives that ensure that the power of the people is either muted institutionally or directly checked so that its potentially damaging effects will be minimal. In this camp, broadly speaking, fall defenders of liberalism and constitutionalism in its democratic form who stress the need for functionally separated powers checking one expression of the popular will against another and a set of laws with special status and effective judicial institutions that can protect the rights of minorities in the face of popular zeal in legislation (e.g., James Madison, John Stuart Mill, Stephen Holmes, Jeremy Waldron). Increased wariness of the popular voice is also expressed in the Schumpeterian view that through the election of elites, the people effectively delegate their capacity for substantive political judgment.

On the other side of the spectrum are those who embrace deepening and strengthening the voice of the public will. While not eschewing certain liberal demands for entrenched bills of rights and other checks to protect minorities, an emphasis on making the practice of popular participation more meaningful with recourse to the value of liberty leads some of these thinkers to be called republican (Phillip Pettit 1997; Michael Sandel 1996). Others promote the deepening of democratic practice for reasons of equality and for the protection of the people against the ambitions of elites and to ensure as wide an effective class of citizens as possible. These are sometimes called proponents of strong democracy (e.g., Benjamin Barber 1984). Demand for greater trust in the voice of the public is often accompanied by a concern for better modes of citizen education or for an increase in the transformative capacities of civil society (Sandel 1996; Robert Putnam 2000). Some advocate increased recourse to mechanisms such as plebiscites, referenda, primaries, recall of public officials, and citizen assemblies (James Fishkin 1997) or less emphasis on the courts to decide matters of public policy (Ran Hirschl 2007). Other radical democratic proposals include the filling of certain categories of public office through lottery (such as is the practice for selection for jury duty in many contemporary democracies) and the establishment of popular tribunes so as to more adequately ensure that all citizens have an equal opportunity

of serving in a public capacity, given the essentially elitist and biased nature of election as a selection mechanism and the consequent tendency of public policy to favor the wealthy (John McCormick 2011). Ted Becker and Christa Daryl Slaton (2000) propound a system of teledemocracy that would utilize electronic media to inform, to connect, and to give a direct voice to citizens. At perhaps the farthest end of the spectrum stand Rousseau and those inspired by his work, who hold that only direct democracy—that is, the people themselves acting as legislators with few formal constraints—can fulfill the necessary conditions of democratic practice.

Alongside the question of constitutional design and the degree and nature of popular input to entrench are the questions of the ways in which the wishes of the people are aggregated and represented. Apart from defenders of direct democracy in the line of Rousseau, all democrats need to come to terms with how to identify an effective and legitimate mechanism of voicing and aggregating popular demands. Representation can be considered at the level of interests, among sociological groups, or as the aggregation of individual preferences in constituencies. Pluralist accounts of democracy favor an understanding of politics as the competition among various interest groups for both the support of the public and access to makers of policy (Robert A. Dahl 1998; David Truman 1951). The role of democratic politics, then, according to pluralists, is to regulate and settle the conflict of interests in a way most conducive to the peace and good governance of the whole. The degree to which this goal is deemed possible is related to how much those interests balance each other, ensuring that none dominates, and to which the various sets of citizen interests are crosscutting rather than reinforcing. Still, the approach has often been criticized for ignoring the degree to which certain interests, and most prominently economic ones, have been protected and entrenched within the system of governance itself. The classic pluralist account of group representation may seriously neglect the structural protection of special interests, protection that may limit the degree of democratic input possible.

As an attempt to restructure and deepen democratic practice, some theorists have suggested the need to institutionalize and empower certain sociological groups in society whose voices might be ineffective in a

classical pluralist scenario. This type of group representation in practice and in theory has taken several forms. Consociational democracy, as practiced in a number of northern European countries, seeks to institutionalize formal accommodation of competing ethnic and/or religious communities as a form of power sharing agreement (Arend Lijphart 1997). It assumes a society characterized by one or a few main cleavages dividing the population into two or more relatively equally powerful groups, the accommodation of which is best managed by community elites. It served as a model for democratic governance in the rather stable social climate of the mid-twentieth century, but it can be considered less appropriate as a descriptive model given vast changes in the sociological makeup of European communities and the recognition of vast diversity supplanting the former primary salience of very broad and homogeneous categories of religion and ethnicity.

Group representation has been advocated more recently as a corrective to the defects of traditional representative democracy, particularly in light of multicultural theory. While some theorists support claims to political autonomy by traditionally oppressed nationalist groups, such as aboriginals in the Canadian context (Will Kymlicka 1995), others decry nationalism but suggest that traditionally oppressed or disadvantaged groups, such as ethnic minorities or underprivileged classes, be offered chances for more representation in legislative bodies (Melissa Williams 1998) or be given institutional veto power over legislative proposals deemed to compromise their well-being (Iris Marion Young 1990). Still, the diversity of the interests in these traditionally disadvantaged groups, given different genders, ethnicities, and ascribed races, makes the question of who will actually speak in their interest and how that interest is defined a complicated one. Young's defense of this mode of representation suggests that the perspective offered by individuals in these groups has been traditionally ignored in liberal democratic policy making and that these sorts of institutional arrangements would make up for the defects of assuming that conditions for democratic representation are met by representing interests and opinions alone. So the issue of how best to represent the voices of democratic citizens is intricately bound up with questions of what is or should be represented.

The form of representation most commonly invoked in the literature on democracy is that related to representational government, a system of governance whereby individuals elect legislators to make policy on their behalf. The question of what it means to represent is central to the question of how good this system of governance and policy making is. For some, the mere act of consent, through the process of voting, is enough to deem the winner of that electoral process a legitimate representative of the people. In practice, the nature of representation on the part of the elected official swings back and forth between a trustee model, whereby the elected official makes decisions deemed or legitimated by appeal to be in the best interests of the constituents even while ignoring the directions of public opinion, and a delegate model, wherein the actual content of public opinion is taken seriously and used as a guide for decision in matters of policy. (This difference is what Hanna Pitkin [1990] has called the mandate-independence controversy.) Politicians may follow the latter approach for purely instrumental purposes of getting reelected, thereby serving the purposes for which the practice of regular elections was instituted, namely, helping to ensure the accountability of local officials.

Others suggest that more legitimate representation in a democratic context must go beyond the policy makers' sense of their relation to the interests of their constituents and enter into deeper sociological continuity between the public and the legislative body. In practical terms, this approach would require that legislatures be bound to certain rules in order to increase the presence of members from traditionally underrepresented groups such as women, minority nationalities, and underclasses, such as in recent laws in France to encourage *parité*. This theory is underpinned by the assumption that policy that is formulated by a more diverse set of legislators will be a more just policy, helping to channel funds more equitably across society and ensuring that the interests of minority communities will be more effectively protected.

Another mechanism suggested that could enhance the diversity of interests and opinions represented, if not wider sociological perspective, is the adoption of electoral laws that temper institutional tendencies to reward one party or coalition in disproportionate terms to its electoral result by creating artificial majorities. The most common of these correctives is proportional

representation (PR), which in broad terms ensures that each political party will be granted roughly the same proportion of seats in a legislative body as the amount of electoral support it was able to achieve. Debates concerning the efficacy and desirability of a form of PR revolve around one of the key questions of democratic theory, namely the relative importance of representativeness, however conceptualized, for a well-functioning democratic system. There is a certain dilemma for those who defend PR as a means to enhance democracy because it often requires coalition governments. Detractors suggest that coalition governments are unstable and greatly decrease governmental accountability, given that policy stances are no longer primarily driven by longstanding and public commitments but by the mechanics of interparty bargaining and compromise.

Democracy as a Process of Ensuring Accountability in Governance

A focus on accountability highlights the question of democratic processes. Issues related to institutional design and to the nature and mode of popular representation tend to circle around a notion of democracy as a blueprint or set of ideas and institutions that, once settled on, can maximize popular rule in an effective way. However, other theorists conceptualize democracy as less a set of established institutions than as a set of processes governed by some established rules that leave the institutional setting more open to democratic contestation. These theorists, who prioritize accountability, focus on the processes both before and after voting through which citizen opinions and interests are expressed and adjudicated.

One important and growing field of democratic theory in this regard is deliberative democratic theory. Inspired first by the work of Jürgen Habermas, theorists of deliberative democracy such as James Fishkin stress the importance of discussion and explore the process by which opinions are formed, expressed, and transformed in the course of exchange in public debate. Public discussion arguably brings participants to think more clearly about the justification for their preferences in terms of public reason or a set of reasonable arguments that all or a majority of citizens could accept. In addition to enhancing democratic accountability, deliberation is defended

for its capacity to deepen democratic legitimacy in an age of skepticism regarding the claims and effectiveness of public institutions. It is also supported from a Hegelian perspective in its potential to facilitate the process through which citizens mediate between their individual ethical commitments and their obligations and identities as members of a broader polity.

An array of both normative and empirical studies explores the effect of different forums and structures of deliberation and the degree to which deliberation may and should shape and transform political preferences and perceptions of self-interest, increase solidarity and strengthen the position of traditionally marginalized groups, help citizens to overcome their differences, and produce results that are reasonable and potentially effective (Simone Chambers 2003). A central issue in this literature is the manner and hence the degree to which popular sovereignty is normatively defended in relation to a rights-based theory setting limits on both what can be said and what can be deemed to be a legitimate outcome of discussion (Seyla Benhabib 1996; Carol Gould 1988). Also important is the question of what counts as public reason and how to judge the place of rhetoric and appeal to emotion that are pervasive in most practices of political discussion.

Should deliberative democrats reject emotional appeal in politics as violating essential norms of good deliberative practice as reason-giving, or seek a more sophisticated account of both emotion and reason that can more readily reflect the realities of public debate (Sharon Krause 2008)? It is generally acknowledged that fully democratic deliberation must allow the very rules of discourse to be subject to free and equal discussion and decision making (Benhabib 1996; Bernard Manin 1997).

This focus on enhancing the accountability of public power through an emphasis on the democratic process through which decisions may be more legitimately reached or consented to has also led to a rethinking of the traditional institutional structures commonly associated with liberal democratic thinking. Some have defended a grassroots conception of decentered democracy, meaning that the forces of contestation and demand for public accountability come from a variety of groups with a diversity of motivations and minimal organization and with a wide variety of targets

that can span from demands for accountability in the workings of international organizations (such as protests at the annual G20 summits) to voicing of concerns over policy at the local level.

Beyond the bounds of the public sphere associated with the liberal democratic state, where demands for accountability still remain the best organized, theorists have voiced a postnational conception of deliberative democracy in a number of ways. Daniele Archibugi and David Held (1995; Held 1996) defend a model of cosmopolitical democracy in which practices of accountability, direct popular representation, and consultation are infused throughout the international system. Others suggest accountability is better effected through nongovernmental organizations and a strengthened global public sphere (James Bohman and William Rehg 1997; John Dryzek 2000).

Perhaps sharing the deliberative-democratic concern for public accountability, but not sharing the premise that public matters can be settled by a process of reasonable accommodation, are theorists of radical pluralism, or agonistic democracy. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985) regard politics as inevitably antagonistic and as a struggle for power; they seek to enhance democratic politics with greater recognition of the value of conflict within liberal democratic constraints. On a somewhat different plane, William E. Connolly (1991) recommends a vision of nonfoundational agonistic democracy in which individuals engage politically based on their sense of identity but with an attitude that ensures that those identities stay open to ongoing questioning and contestation.

Democracy as a Lived Practice of Equality With Others

In theory, a just practice of deliberation needs to presume an underlying equality among the participants so that the preferences of each at the start are on an equal footing and so that it is the force of argument or persuasion that determines the outcome of discussion rather than underlying power dynamics (Habermas 1998). Many theorists who stress the centrality of equality for democracy, over and above the values of participation and accountability, tend to be wary of both formal institutional and

accountability models of democracy and hence explore the more informal social and cultural mechanisms that shape identities in order to ensure that democratic participants can have an equal say. From this perspective of democratic theory, barriers to effective equality can be conceptualized through a number of lenses that include differential socioeconomic status, gender differences, and multicultural differences as well as citizenship status as regulated by the state. Equality can be regarded as a good in itself as well as an instrumental good necessary for the exercise of proper autonomy and individual dignity. It can be conceived as democracy's precondition as well as its ultimate policy goal.

Views of what equality looks like and how it is best achieved differ significantly and are often broached with a particular feature of individual identity in mind. Multicultural theorists have often settled on the idea of recognition as an important component of equality within democratic practice (Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson 1996; Charles Taylor 1994). At its core, recognition involves an acknowledgment of the dignity of others and of their worth not just as human beings, but for the substantive commitments their lives embody with each individual having a particular identity. In certain cases, recognition may require a granting of group autonomy or forms of self-government, as in the case of some aboriginal peoples. In other cases, the demands of recognition might be met through the granting of specific privileges or rights, or its reverse that is a guarantee of impartial and undifferentiated treatment. Because of the need for attunement to cultural difference and specificity that a theory of multiculturalism embodies, theorists of this school tend to eschew universal prescriptions and seek to promote equality through a diversity of measures that are judged to best meet the concerns and challenges of the group considered. Still, a certain paradox rests at the core of much of multicultural theorizing. Attentiveness to the well-being and equal stake of all members of the political community makes the question of what is to the good of all more complicated if not irresolvable and makes it more difficult to identify what if anything binds members of the larger political community together. Left unresolved are the purported equal rights of different cultural groups to deny the equal rights of individuals (e.g., women) within their own group

Theorists of democracy with a view to gender equality often look to the structures of the family and private sphere as the cause of women's inequality in economic and public life. Susan Okin (1989) criticized theorists of liberal democracy for ignoring the family, advocating a rethinking of traditional roles at home as a necessary condition for equality at the level of the state. This stance has been accompanied by demands for greater participation of women in the political process and a desire to see a larger number of women in political office. In general terms, feminists have made important contributions to democratic theory in leading theorists to acknowledge that power relations within the private sphere have a significant impact on the functioning of the public sphere and its outcomes. Feminists have also led democratic theorists to recognize that the granting of civil and political rights is not a sufficient condition for effective equality, but a necessary one. From a care feminist perspective, democratic equality is not only about the just distribution of political entitlements but about, even more importantly, having citizens accept one another as fully fledged and equal members of the same community with acknowledgment of some responsibility for the well-being of the others. A more radical feminist approach to democratic theory and practice rejects any definitive account of what liberation for women might look like and instead builds solidarities with other groups regarded as oppressed and seeks democratic experience in a practice of shared resistance. These two feminist perspectives share a communitarian component that transcends the individualist emphasis of liberal feminism.

Another important field of the literature on democratic equality, though less a focus than it once was, explores the dysfunctional impact of class differences and economic inequality on democracy (Anne Phillips 1999). Theorists have highlighted the inability of liberal democratic states to minimize the income gap, thereby increasing the gap in life chances among different classes, a trend exacerbated by a set of global fiscal crises that have debilitated the welfare state. The existence of a permanent underclass undermines the possibility for democracy in the state because it makes it virtually impossible for citizens to see themselves as participating in a common political project of their own making in which they stand as equals (Dahl 1998). This challenge was acknowledged by Aristotle in his

discussion of the mixed regime, and it may well stand as the most enduring challenge to democratic practice in the long run.

Conclusion: The Future of Democratic Theory

The contours of contemporary democratic theory are very broad and complex as they not only cover competing understandings of what democracy is or should be, but also include a wide range of practices and mechanisms through which these various goals can be furthered. Despite the usefulness of distinguishing democratic theories in terms of participation, accountability, and equality, these and other aspects of democracy in fact overlap. A number of theorists recognize the need to reflect and advance democratic practice on different planes simultaneously.

In many ways, the field of democratic theory today is almost synonymous with most of contemporary political philosophy, not only in the Anglo-American world but increasingly in other parts of the world as well, as reflected in the prodemocracy movements beginning in 2011 in North Africa and the Middle East. Possible directions for democratic theory in the future involve greater attention to the expansion of rights, benefits, and privileges to classes of citizens or community participants still marginalized in the political process, including immigrants, children, future generations, and the natural world, and the development of more imaginative ways that we might deepen the democratic process and make public institutions more accountable.

Rebecca Kingston

See also [Citizenship](#); [Civil Society](#); [Constitutionalism](#); [Contract Theory](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Equality and Egalitarianism](#); [General Will](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Proportional Representation](#); [Representation](#); [Republicanism](#); [Rousseau, Jean-Jacques](#); [Rule of Law](#); [Social Democracy](#); [State, Theories of](#)

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John Dewey was an American philosopher and social theorist known chiefly for his application of educational theories, especially pragmatism, to ideas of democracy. Dewey was born October 20, 1859, in Burlington, Vermont. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of Vermont in 1879 and then taught high school in Pennsylvania and Vermont for three years before beginning graduate school. In 1884, he received his PhD in philosophy from Johns Hopkins University. His first academic positions were at the universities of Michigan (1884–88, 1889–94) and Minnesota (1888–89). In 1894, Dewey moved to the University of Chicago, where he taught philosophy, psychology, and pedagogy and where he founded the Laboratory School to put his educational philosophy into practice. Most of his academic life, from 1904 until his retirement in 1930, was spent as a professor of philosophy at Columbia University. He lectured in Japan in 1919 and in China from 1919 to 1921; he encountered much intellectual resistance in the former country but at least reached wide audiences in the latter. In 1937, Dewey served as chair of the commission in Mexico City that investigated the charges of treason and murder brought in Moscow against Leon Trotsky, who was then in exile in Mexico; Dewey was careful to distinguish his political thought from Trotsky's communism as he led the commission to a finding of not guilty. His published writings include many articles on contemporary events for *The New Republic*. Engaged intellectually almost until the end of his life, he died June 1, 1952.

Pragmatism

Dewey was initially persuaded by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's philosophy, according to which the world is the actualization or appearance of the absolute spirit and the study of the human mind is a means to the study of the absolute spirit. By 1903, however, Dewey became associated with a school known as pragmatism, which teaches that humans are to be studied on their own terms and for their own sake (*Studies in Logical Theory*). His pragmatism is ultimately a theory of how we come to have knowledge (*How We Think* and *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*). That theory articulates the scientific method, which Dewey often calls the method of intelligence. Thinking arises in order to resolve a problematic situation. A thinker formulates a hypothesis that he or she believes will solve the query, and he or she transforms the situation through observation and experimentation to test the hypothesis. The hypothesis may be declared tentatively true if the problem has been resolved to his or her satisfaction. Unlike Niccolò Machiavelli or Karl Marx (in their different ways), Dewey does not want to give the impression that all thought is for the sake of action; scientific reflection may find its consummation in aesthetic experience (*Experience and Nature* and *Art as Experience*). But he credits Francis Bacon with initiating the modern spirit by equating knowledge with power. Knowledge is always subject to revision, according to Dewey; to be dogmatic is to fail to cope with a universe in constant flux (*The Quest for Certainty*).

Democracy and Socialism

Democracy is central to Dewey's political thought, partly because he sees a close link between it and science: both require, and even champion, free inquiry and communication and the toleration of different opinions (*Freedom and Culture*). The advancement of knowledge occurs when scientists share their results; science depends upon socialization. Conversely, science can make political liberty more effective by increasing citizens' ability to achieve their purposes; the scientific method should be used to solve moral and political problems, as well as physical ones.

Democracy is not merely a form of government, but rather a moral ideal that should be realized in all spheres of life, including family, school, industry, and religion. The democratic ideal comprises the participation by each person in setting goals and the full contribution of each person toward fulfillment of goals. The overall aim of the democratic ideal is growth, which is “the only moral ‘end.’” Growth consists in a person’s continual movement from the stage of acting according to habit, to the stage of reflecting upon the meaning of that habit, and finally to the stage of choosing to act according to a higher, or more thoughtful, habit. “Not perfection as a final goal, but the ever-enduring process of perfecting, maturing, refining is the aim in living” (Dewey 1982, 181).

Democracy does not entail opposition to all authority because authority can be necessary for the promotion of personal liberty. For example, in education, where Dewey exerted his greatest influence (*Democracy and Education*), teachers are needed to guide children’s activities. Democratic aspects include designing the curriculum around children’s interests instead of imposing a rote series of studies on them, intermingling thought and action in the curriculum instead of separating them, and treating the school as a society in miniature instead of as mere preparation for adulthood. Education aims to form strong character in people and that occurs where participation in society is at its fullest (*Human Nature and Conduct*). For Dewey the entire purpose of education seems to be social. Schools are not the only, or the primary, means of education; the potential for education exists wherever there is communication, which serves to form and maintain the shared beliefs and practices that make community possible.

One major obstacle to that communication, in Dewey’s view, is the isolation of social classes from one another, particularly the separation of those who labor from those who reap the fruits of labor. Corporate capitalism, even as modified by President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal, entails fundamentally private control of the economy that entrenches power in the hands of a few. The solution is to give workers in all occupations control over the socioeconomic circumstances of their lives. At one time, Dewey thought that managing production through a federation of self-directing industries would attain that result. After the onset of the Great Depression, he concluded that greater socialization was necessary: large-scale public

works, redistribution of wealth by means of taxation, and public control of natural resources, banking, basic utilities, and the means of communication and transportation.

Liberalism and Equality

Despite Dewey's advocacy of socialism, the distinction between private and public is critical for his political theory: human transactions with consequences affecting only those directly involved are private, while those with consequences affecting others are public. The limits of the public sphere cannot be set in advance but must be determined experimentally. Actions that need to be regulated—encouraged or discouraged—can be known by “the far-reaching character of consequences, whether in space or time; their settled, uniform and recurrent nature, and their irreparableness” (Dewey 1984, 275). One implication is that no civic association may be considered forever beyond the bounds of public regulation.

Representatives and other public officials constitute the government, but the state also includes the public—or, more accurately, a collection of publics because Dewey defines a public as a group of people indirectly affected by the consequences of a transaction. Multiple transactions create multiple publics, and in a large, complex country, there are so many overlapping publics that often people are not even aware of the stake that they have in a particular issue. Thus, Dewey's main political goal is to help the members of a public identify themselves. Accomplishing that goal requires improving the conditions of public discussion—and prior to that, the conditions of inquiry. Much of the inquiry will be performed by experts, but citizens must be prepared to evaluate their work and, in the process, help to determine what policies make “the widest possible contribution to the interests of all—or at least of the great majority” (Dewey 1987, 56). Success, or growth, at this level can be measured in terms of the number and variety of people's shared interests as manifested in private associations and the extent of interaction among those interests. The promotion of that growth, not merely the prevention of harm, is the purpose of the state.

Dewey supports limited government for the promotion of personal liberty. Liberty is not merely the absence of restraint but is the “secure release and

fulfillment of personal potentialities which take place only in rich and manifold association with others” (Dewey 1984, 329). Dewey, thus, opposes the liberalism of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, who take as their premise individuals with rights in a state of nature and who see the political state as the result of a social contract among its members. Social and political life is not served by such a distortion of history and psychology. Liberty never exists in the abstract but only in particular situations when someone acts to fulfill his or her potential. Furthermore, what is natural in humans cannot be entirely distinguished from what is acquired or learned. Human beings have innate needs, including companionship, aesthetic expression, and even combat, but there is no channel, such as war, in which those needs must inevitably be directed. The human mind itself is largely the creature of social institutions and customs—although through art and science a person may help to create his or her environment.

Individuals’ rights such as freedom of speech are important, but in order for them to be effective, the right of each person to be protected must be seen as being in the interest of all. Conversely, each person should see that it is to his or her advantage to work for the good of all. Although Dewey prefers to consider individuals’ rights in a social context, by 1939, there is a change of emphasis in his writings: from social life as a whole, with individuals subordinate, to the uniqueness of individuals and personal liberty, with the state as a means toward that end. He declares that the change was prompted by his opposition to totalitarian communism and fascism.

The full realization of liberty depends upon equality, defined as “the unhampered share which each individual member of the community has in the consequences of associated action” (Dewey 1984, 329). The effective ability of each person to participate in shaping consequences depends upon the participation by others. Dewey calls for equality of opportunity, not equality of results; the former requires that people’s differing educational, economic, and other needs be met, but not that everyone have the same amount of resources and power (*Ethics*).

Unlike Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Dewey does not posit direct democracy as a political ideal. Laws will not come from citizens themselves. But Dewey

does not insist on any particular form of political organization: “There is no sanctity in universal suffrage, frequent elections, majority rule, congressional and cabinet government” (Dewey 1984, 326). Dewey does not readily see adequate replacements for all of those institutions, but he is open to any political arrangement that will promote the liberty, equality, and growth of the members of a political community by means of public discussion. Throughout his writings on political theory (including *Individualism, Old and New*), however, he gives relatively little attention to institutional reform, preferring instead a more abstract analysis of political principles. One principle that he endorses is that political reform should take into account “occupational groups and the organized knowledge and purposes that are involved in the existence of such groups” so that the public interest will not be defined by the majority only (Dewey 1987, 50).

It is unclear how much direct involvement Dewey expects private citizens to have in political affairs. On the one hand, he writes that “the primary problem of the public” is “to achieve such recognition of itself as will give it weight in the selection of official representatives and in the definition of their responsibilities and rights” (Dewey 1984, 283). Dewey is aware that such work is already more than most citizens in modern democracies manage to do and that elected representatives cannot be expected to do much of it. On the other hand, he hopes that the development of strong local communities will make political matters more understandable and make it feasible for people to become involved. Moreover, democracy in education and industry should increase demands for political democracy too.

As to the particular purposes pursued by human beings, the precise content of their education, their exact economic and political organization—Dewey is determined not to repeat the mistakes of his philosophic predecessors by trying to specify those things in advance. The chief mistake of early political liberalism was that it did not perceive the relativity of all ideas and principles. To see the relativity of ideas is to understand that a single idea may be found in history either to have produced or to have prevented social change. Early liberalism did not understand that the idea of the individual with natural rights could be used not only to increase liberty, but also to curtail it: for example, the idea of the individual with a natural right to enter into contracts with others could lead to a society where it was deemed

illegitimate for government to aid the poor. Since then, we have learned from science—where further experimentation often overturns prior results—that the meaning and validity of ideas vary with the purposes for which they are used. Thus, Dewey concludes that there is an inherent connection between historical relativism and the scientific method. It is a difficult question whether Dewey may consistently assert that all ideas and principles are relative and that science progressively discloses the secrets of nature—a question that may motivate continued study of his multifaceted writings.

David Fott

See also [Citizenship](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Equality and Egalitarianism](#); [Human Nature, Theories of](#); [Liberalism](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Pragmatism](#)

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Dialectic(s)

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Dialectic(s)

Dialectic(s) (ancient Greek *dialektikē*) is a form of argument or type of philosophy with roots going back to ancient Greece and that has been particularly influential in Hegelian and Marxist thought.

The term is used in a variety of ways. In the early (Socratic) dialogues of Plato, it describes a form of argument in which truth emerges from the clash of contradictory viewpoints. The term was reintroduced into modern philosophy by Immanuel Kant for whom it signified “the logic of illusion” by which contradictions arise when reason tries to go beyond the bounds of experience. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, by contrast, regards dialectic as an inherent feature of rational thought. The contradictions that arise within Kantian and other nondialectical forms of philosophy point toward a deeper truth. This outlook is most systematically presented in Hegel’s (1969) *Science of Logic*. This is not a work of formal logic; it is a logic of categories, a work of ontology and metaphysics. Its most important tenets are that all concrete and determinate things are in relation and interaction with other things, that they contain contradictions and, as a result, are in a process of change and development.

Hegel uses this philosophy to comprehend concrete and specific aspects of human life, including society and its development. It implies that all phenomena must be understood in their interrelations and in their becoming and change, in terms of the contradictory aspects or forces that are at work within them. This basis has been a particularly fruitful for the understanding

of social life, politics, and history. For Hegel, all human phenomena are historical and must be understood in their development. Historical change is not arbitrary or contingent; it is lawlike and rational in its course. It is a progressive process that moves through a series of stages toward an end: the realization of spirit (*Geist*), freedom, and human self-consciousness.

Karl Marx was strongly influenced by Hegel's philosophy. His theory of history—historical materialism—shares many of Hegel's ideas. Marx, too, sees human reality as essentially dialectical and historical. Moreover, he sees its development as a rational and progressive process that proceeds through a series of stages. However, Marx rejects Hegel's philosophical idealism. Instead of seeing history as spiritual and teleological, he insists that material and economic influences are primary. The conflicting forces in terms of which historical development must be understood are, for Marx, the economic forces and relations of production. These manifest themselves socially and politically as struggles between social classes, and this drives society forward.

All hitherto existing societies have been made up of conflicting classes (except perhaps the earliest and simplest societies). Each stage, or mode of production, is characterized by different classes in opposition. For the most part, historical change is gradual, but it is also punctuated at times by revolutionary upheavals. For Marx, history is a materially progressive process. The present stage, capitalism, will ultimately be superseded by socialism and communism in which class divisions will supposedly be eliminated.

Marx wrote little about his philosophical approach. It was left to Friedrich Engels to spell it out in a number of works published after Marx's death (*Anti-Dühring*, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, *Dialectics of Nature*). Engels specifies three laws of dialectic: unity of opposites, transition of quantity into quality, and negation of the negation. These are often criticized for reducing dialectic to simplistic formulae. Engels also treats dialectic as a universal philosophy that applies not only to the human world but also to nature. In this he is following Hegel, who also treats dialectic as a universal logic applicable to all concrete things. Many of the leading figures of orthodox Marxism

(Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, Mao Zedong) have followed Engels in this respect. However, the idea of a dialectic of nature has given rise to much controversy. Many other Marxists have argued that dialectical development occurs only in human and historical phenomena (György Lukács, Jean-Paul Sartre). In recent years, a school of analytical Marxism has attempted to interpret Marxism without any reference to Hegelian and dialectical ideas, but it is doubtful that Marx's ideas can be grasped satisfactorily in these terms.

Sean Sayers

See also [Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#)

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Dicey, Albert Venn

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Dicey, Albert Venn

Albert Venn Dicey (1835–1922) expressed the doctrines of classical Victorian liberalism with a brevity and clarity few others have achieved. A lifelong admirer of Jeremy Bentham, the exponent of utilitarianism, he believed fervently in individual liberty, the value of free markets, the removal of government restraints on personal conduct, and the abolition of religious tests for civic participation. Dicey took for granted the maxim that the government that governed least governed best.

Dicey was born to parents who embraced contemporary liberal values. Educated initially at home because of his fragile health, Dicey earned his bachelor's degree in 1858 at Oxford where he studied at Balliol College. After reading for the bar at the Inner Temple, he was called in 1863. Dicey enjoyed moderate success in legal practice, but it was only in 1882, when he won election to the Vinerian Professorship of English Law at Oxford, that he became a public intellectual of considerable influence.

The most famous synthesis of legal and political ideals appeared in Dicey's 1885 treatise *Introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution*. In this magisterial volume, still influential among common lawyers around the world, Dicey argued that the British constitution rested on three fundamental principles. The rule of law, as Dicey defined it, meant that each citizen enjoyed a presumptive freedom from government unless interference had a legal basis. Individuals enjoyed an equality before the law that government could not violate by arbitrary action. Next, Dicey

explained the sovereignty of Parliament in accord with the jurisprudence of John Austin, a major figure in the genesis of legal positivism, except that Dicey believed in political as well as legal supremacy. The constitution vested this authority in Parliament whose only restriction was the inability to bind its successors. Finally, conventions of the constitution, binding understandings about political conduct, depended ultimately on parliamentary authority. The constitution, as Dicey traced its history, guaranteed maximum liberty under law.

In 1905, Dicey published his other great political work, *Lectures on the Relation Between Law and Public Opinion in England During the Nineteenth Century*. To his great dismay, Dicey found that changes in public opinion had caused an increasing government intervention in daily life that he equated with socialism. The level of activity, though modest by later standards, nevertheless caused Dicey to lament the disappearance of individual freedom through government growth. Increased taxation, the rise in number and scope of parliamentary statutes, and the expansion of economic regulation subverted the principles Dicey had held all his life.

The one political issue, however, that occupied his greatest attention was Home Rule for Ireland. As the jurist who had made parliamentary sovereignty a principal feature of the constitution, Dicey opposed any attempt to weaken parliamentary authority. For Dicey sovereignty was complete and indivisible. The demand for a subsidiary parliament in Dublin with jurisdiction over internal Irish affairs would exempt one part of the United Kingdom from parliamentary oversight. From 1886 to 1922, the year of his death, Dicey increasingly despaired, for the ultimate establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922 violated his tenets of parliamentary sovereignty.

Dicey's exposition of his political ideals has attenuated since his death. With the entry of the United Kingdom into the European Community, with the potential for appeals to the European Court of Justice, Dicey would no doubt have concluded that parliamentary sovereignty had vanished. The enlargement of government in the twentieth century has eroded the assumption that only limited government could protect individual liberty; Dicey would never accept that government might actually enhance

opportunity and freedom. Finally, Dicey's insistence on the blessings of an unregulated free market would make him suspicious of all contemporary economic theories. In the end, therefore, Dicey will always deserve respect for the political ideals he so sincerely endorsed, but these Victorian values have vanished and with them, his relevance for modern politics.

Richard Cosgrove

See also [Democratic Theory](#); [Law and Political Thought](#); [Liberalism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Utilitarianism](#)

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Graeme Garrard Graeme Garrard

Dictatorship of the Proletariat

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Dictatorship of the Proletariat

The dictatorship of the proletariat refers to the temporary phase of democratic rule that the German theorist Karl Marx (1818–83) and many of his followers believed would need to follow the fall of capitalism in order to make the advent of a communist society possible. In *The Communist Manifesto* ([1848] 1967), Marx and Friedrich Engels (1820–95) claim that the route from capitalism to communism is not direct but will necessarily go through several stages. First, capitalism will inevitably collapse under the weight of its own internal contradictions as the condition of the oppressed and impoverished majority (the proletariat) becomes unbearable. In the wake of this collapse of capitalism, a battle for democracy would ensue between the desperate and dispossessed majority and the small class of increasingly wealthy owners of the means of production (the bourgeoisie); Marx hoped and expected the former would eventually win. During the next phase, which he later called the dictatorship of the proletariat, the victorious working class should use the coercive machinery of the state that had been wrested from the bourgeoisie to dismantle the capitalist system of private property and social and economic inequality, by force if necessary. Class conflict would continue as long as the bourgeoisie, although defeated politically, retained considerable economic power and actively resisted the “despotic inroads on the rights of property” by the proletarian state to complete the revolution. Political power, which Marx and Engels regarded in essentially negative terms as “merely the organized power of one class for oppressing another,” would be necessary until this

task was complete. Only then would it be desirable and possible for the state finally to “wither away” (Engels’s term) with the complete abolition of all classes, leading to the advent of a stateless communist society.

Marx used the term *dictatorship of the proletariat* in an 1852 letter to Joseph Weydemeyer (1818–66), in which he described it as part of the “transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society,” and in his *Critique of the Gotha Program* ([1875] 1947) to describe this period of revolutionary transformation between capitalism and communism. In *The Civil War in France* ([1871] 2001), Marx describes the Paris Commune, a working-class government that briefly ruled the city in 1871, in terms that roughly correspond to his idea of a dictatorship of the proletariat. Engels was even more emphatic on this point than Marx, writing in his 1891 introduction to the pamphlet: “Do you want to know what this dictatorship looks like? Look at the Paris Commune. That was the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.” Also, Engels stressed to a greater extent than Marx the need for the workers’ state to employ terror against counterrevolutionaries to ensure that the gains made by the proletariat would not be lost.

Marx regarded himself principally as an analyst of capitalism. Consequently, he wrote comparatively little about what he believed would likely succeed it. His comments on the transition to communism are therefore quite limited and sketchy, unlike his very detailed and extensive analysis of the workings of capitalism. He clearly viewed the victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie as a necessary but not sufficient step toward the establishment of a communist society, requiring the state (now in the hands of the workers) to institute sweeping reforms such as the redistribution of wealth and property through progressive taxation and death duties, the nationalization of farms and industries, the establishment of free universal education and health care, and universal suffrage as steps on the road to the eventual abolition of all classes and the final dissolution of the state as a coercive class apparatus. By the 1870s, Marx softened his position somewhat, allowing for the prospect of a peaceful transition to communism, particularly outside the industrialized capitalist states of Western Europe. However, he crucially did not specify how long the transitional dictatorship of the proletariat would likely last, and he played down the use of violence against the recalcitrant bourgeoisie, unlike Engels. In his 1891 introduction

to Marx's "Wage-Labor and Capital," Engels refers rather hazily to a "short transitional period involving some privation" between the fall of capitalism and the establishment of communism. This emphasis on the short, temporary nature of the dictatorship of the proletariat is consistent with the republican constitution of ancient Rome, which allowed for the office of dictator (*dictatura*) to permit one man to rule the city for short periods on behalf of the people in an emergency. Unlike the Roman dictator, however, Marx envisioned the dictatorship of the proletariat as democratic rather than as a temporary suspension of democracy by one man since the majority of the population are members of the proletariat. He believed that the transition from capitalism to communism would be a democratic dictatorship of one class (the workers) against another (the owners).

Marx's vagueness about the character and duration of the dictatorship of the proletariat meant that it would remain a point of bitter contention among socialists after his death, particularly in the twentieth century with the establishment of officially socialist states such as the Soviet Union and the Peoples' Republic of China. For example, Lenin (1870–1924), effective leader of the Soviet Union after the Russian Revolution of October 1917, made the dictatorship of the proletariat a central feature of his *The State and Revolution* ([1917] 1943) and his pamphlet "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky" (1918), which advocates the use of violence by the proletarian state against the bourgeoisie. Fellow Bolshevik Leon Trotsky (1879–1940), People's Commissar of Military and Naval Affairs in the Soviet Union until 1925, endorsed Lenin's position in *Terrorism and Communism* (1920), arguing that the sheer tenacity of the bourgeoisie after the Russian Revolution (which was followed by a prolonged civil war) meant that state terror would have to be used as a weapon "against a class that, despite being doomed to destruction, does not want to perish." Both Lenin and Trotsky were reacting against what they regarded as the political naiveté of the moderate social democrat Karl Kautsky (1854–1938), who had condemned revolutionary violence for violating the sanctity of human life and attacked the extensive Bolshevik use of force in *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat* (1918). He argued that the only ethically legitimate means to achieve socialism was peacefully through the ballot box. In *Terrorism and Communism* (1919), Kautsky attacked the use of terrorism by the Soviet state, "which begins with the abolition of every form of freedom of the

Press, and ends in a system of wholesale execution, is certainly the most striking and the most repellent of all,” provoking the contempt of Lenin and Trotsky, who wrote polemics against him.

Joseph Stalin (1878–1953) succeeded Lenin as General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Like Lenin, who had argued for the indispensable role of a dedicated vanguard party of radical revolutionaries to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia, Stalin identified the Communist Party with the dictatorship of the proletariat in his book *The Foundations of Leninism* ([1924] 1939). The 1936 constitution of the Soviet Union, drafted by a committee headed by Stalin (sometimes known as the Stalin constitution), declared the Communist Party to be “the vanguard of the working people in their struggle to strengthen and develop the socialist system” (article 126). This idea is unlike Marx’s view that it would be a form of democratic dictatorship based on a particular class (the proletariat) rather than on a particular party. Stalin also claimed that it would likely take a long time to break down the considerable residual power of reactionary forces after the revolution, whereas Marx did not specify how long it would last. These conceptual modifications to Marx’s position were made in response to the practical exigencies faced by the leaders of a socialist state, like Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin, rather than as mere theories conceived from within a capitalist society, as in the cases of Marx and Engels.

Stalin’s successor, Nikita Khrushchev (1894–1971), was First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union during the 22nd Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in 1961. The program adopted by this Congress departed significantly from Marx in declaring that

the dictatorship of the proletariat has fulfilled its historic mission and has ceased to be indispensable in the USSR from the point of the tasks of internal development. The state, which arose as a state of the dictatorship of the proletariat, has in the new, contemporary stage, become a state of the entire people, an organ expressing the interests and will of the people as a whole.

Such revisionism was harshly denounced as a hoax by the Chinese Communists, who rejected the concept of a state of the entire people existing after the dictatorship of the proletariat since Marx had said that every state has a class character. This Soviet Congress was the last attended by the Chinese Communist Party.

Graeme Garrard

See also [Chinese Marxism](#); [Communism](#), [Varieties of](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Lenin and Leninism](#); [Mao Zedong](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Russian Revolution](#), [Political Thought of the](#); [Stalin and Stalinism](#); [Terrorism](#); [Trotsky, Leon](#); [Utopianism](#)

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“There is no true sovereign but the nation; there can be no true legislator but the people,” wrote the French philosopher Denis Diderot (1713–84) in the opening to his *Observations on the Nakaz* ([1774] 1992), thirteen years before the drafting of the American Constitution. Diderot went on to demand that any constitution must begin with the words “we, the people” and that the sovereign must be judged by the same democratic laws as her subjects.

A proper appreciation of Diderot’s position was long hampered by the late publication and attribution of key works such as his *Observations on the Nakaz* and parts of Guillaume Raynal’s *Histoire des deux Indes* (1772–81), both occurring only in the twentieth century, and by a frequent lack of understanding of the historical and political circumstances of Diderot’s own life and work.

Diderot’s political convictions had undergone a long and dramatic development, from his early constitutional royalism and economic ideas in the physiocratic tradition to an increasing skepticism toward all forms of political power and its holder’s entitlement to rule. This position placed Diderot among the most radical political thinkers of the French Enlightenment.

Diderot was the editor of *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*. Comprising seventeen volumes of articles

and eleven volumes of illustrations and published in Paris between 1751 and 1765, it is often regarded as the first modern encyclopedia and as an embodiment of Enlightenment ideals and aspirations. The work was intended to represent the most advanced state of contemporary knowledge in every discipline and to set forth the connections and interrelations among the various branches of knowledge. The *Encyclopédie* was initially coedited by Diderot and Jean Le Rond d'Alembert, until d'Alembert resigned from the project in 1758, leaving Diderot as the sole editor.

In his articles for the *Encyclopédie*, the philosopher predictably champions moderate opinions, even if he daringly begins his article "Autorité politique" with the sentence: "No man has received from nature the right to command others. Liberty is a gift of the heavens and every individual has the same right to enjoy it as he has to enjoy [his] reason." Power can have only two sources: tyrannical violence or consent. It is notable that already here, in 1751, divine right has no role to play. A prince must gain and deserve the free consent of his subjects as a basis for his authority. In a work submitted to hostile censors, this statement was as far as Diderot could dare to go.

In 1774, Diderot returned from his stay at the court of Tsarina Catherine the Great deeply disillusioned about the possibility of enlightened monarchy and angered by his own previous naivety. It was then that he wrote his most incisive political works.

In contrast to his erstwhile friend Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whose republic some thought later provided a blueprint for totalitarian dictatorship, Diderot rejected the tyranny of virtue in his *Observations* ([1774] 1992), demanding instead a purely secular state: "The distance between altar and throne can never be too great. . . . The troubles of a society are most terrible when the disturbers [of social peace] can use the pretext of religion to mask their intentions." The apparent marriage of power and enlightened ideas was another such mask, a fact that made him keep his distance from both the "philosopher king" Frederick II of Prussia and from his chief apologist, Voltaire.

Diderot's collaboration with Guillaume Raynal in the *Histoire des deux Indes* led him to formulate a comprehensive critique of colonialism and

slavery. Nothing, he wrote, certainly no pretense of cultural superiority or missionary intent, could justify the subjugation of other peoples or the suppression of their cultural or moral practices—still less their enslavement and the pillage of their lands. If the only goal of morality is happiness, then nobody is in a position to judge the ultimate happiness of those living according to different customs, as Diderot argued in his *Supplement au voyage de Bougainville* ([1772] 1988).

While Diderot posits the existence of a universal morality, it can by definition not be embodied by any particular, local tradition, as their precepts are mutually contradictory. Therefore, no tradition can claim precedence over any other. Only the ability of any moral code to satisfy the common needs of human beings arising from their shared physical constitution can serve as a measuring rod for its merits.

Profoundly and uncompromisingly humanist in his principles and pluralist in his orientation, Diderot nevertheless remained skeptical about the possibility of a truly democratic state. This, he asserted, would demand a “concert of wills,” a common purpose, which could not be established in large societies, and a degree of education he believed to be unattainable for most citizens. “The Enlightenment,” he wrote, “ends at the suburbs.”

A similar consideration made Diderot immune to the utopianism elaborated by his friends Baron Paul Thierry d’Holbach and Claude Adrien Helvétius: Human beings are the product of their physical constitution as well as their education. This constitution, however, depends on bodily (including intellectual and emotional) characteristics changing randomly with every new individual—a conception anticipating our modern understanding of random mutation and DNA. Therefore, even if ideal laws would be possible there would always be people of different degrees of intelligence, morality, and ability. Politics can never do anything but work with the inconstant and imperfect conditions at hand, a continuous process of negotiation and adaptation, not a historical march toward an ideal state.

Philipp Blom

See also [Democratic Theory](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [French Political Thought](#); [French Revolution](#), [Political Thought of the](#); [Religion](#)

[and Western Political Thought](#); [Republicanism](#)

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Émile Durkheim (1858–1917), a founder of sociology, never published a major work on politics but brought political issues in through concern with a crisis and the need for reform. He described the crisis in his first book, *The Division of Labour* ([1893] 1984), and summarized, in the preface to the second edition (1902), his long-developing vision of reform through new occupational groups. While this method is one way to approach Durkheim and politics, another is his concern with ritual, symbolism, and the sacred in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* ([1912] 1965). Although it is possible to see connections between these landscapes, it remains necessary to recognize differences between them. His essay “Individualism and the Intellectuals” ([1898] 1975) dismissed ritual and symbolism as superficial and invoked each person’s sacredness in calling for justice in social and economic relations. In a similar vein, his recently rediscovered article “The Politics of the Future” ([1917] 2009) returned, at the end of Durkheim’s life, to a related problem at the core of *The Division of Labour*.

Durkheim was a son of the rabbi of the small town of Épinal in eastern France and was registered in his birth certificate with the prenames David Émile, the first identifiably Jewish, but was known by the second within and outside his family. His career was typical of a pattern of assimilation and upward social-geographical mobility among males of his generation and background, making their way through the state educational system and migrating to the capital or other great cities. He went to Paris as a student in

1876, graduated from the prestigious École Normale Supérieure in 1882, then taught philosophy at various high schools but was already drawn to sociology. He obtained his first academic appointment in 1887 as a lecturer in social science at the University of Bordeaux. He became involved in the Dreyfus Affair in the 1890s to defend each person's equal status and rights as an individual. At the same time, along with a stream of publications, he was organizing the launch of a new journal, the *Année Sociologique*, and building up round him a group of young and talented scholars. He returned to Paris in 1902 with an appointment at the Sorbonne, where he was elected in 1913, in recognition of his achievements, to the first chair of sociology in France. With the outbreak of war in 1914, he threw himself into the national effort, lost his son in action in 1916, and tried to keep going through his work. He died, whether of grief, exhaustion, or cancer, while still in his fifties. Although above all committed to the intellectual life rather politics, he was a firm supporter of the Republic, was sympathetic with certain forms of socialism, and was the subject of anti-Semitic attacks.

The Politics of a Crisis

Durkheim's first book sets out in search of a modern social solidarity but ends up describing a crisis. Modern solidarity depends on conditions in which all can develop their unique qualities in line with their abilities and so depends on what he calls the spontaneous division of labor. This aspiration is blocked in modern everyday scenes of exploitation, injustice, and the inequalities of a class society, featuring a combination of what he calls the anomic and the constrained divisions of labor.

An underlying cause of an anomic, morally deregulated division of labor is the creation of social gulfs in which individuals are not merely divided by inequalities of class but are physically ghettoized and segregated in the alienation of a radical separateness. To overcome anomie and rebuild a moral code, society must overcome these gulfs and rebuild solidarity through webs of groups that link individuals with one another and with wider social life. Civil society's lack of an organization to tackle the crisis is part of the crisis itself. At the core of what for him involves a political malaise is what he describes, in *The Division of Labour's* new preface, as

the sociological monstrosity of a mass of atomized individuals and an authoritarian, overcentralized state.

Unlike Karl Marx, Durkheim saw no future withering away of the state but maintained, on the contrary, that everything pointed to its growing role. Hence, he was alarmed at a withering away of civil society and campaigned for what amounts to a form of guild socialism. This form of socialism, he thought, could renew active citizenship through a pluralist commonwealth that counterbalances the state with an independently powerful democratic organization of occupational groups. He defended an ethic of the person but criticized competing currents of individualism, including those connected with an authoritarian state and sordid commercialism, code, perhaps, for the economistic, interest-driven individualism of capitalism.

The preface to the second edition of *The Division of Labour* thus criticizes diverse modern forms of collectivism that reimprison individuals in community, a monolithic state, or a chauvinistic nationalism. His own alternative asserts an ethic of the person not as a mere apparition out of philosophical thin air but as a real being rooted in sociohistorical movements toward what in various texts he calls the human ideal and a human *patrie*. While envisaging the formation of new political societies such as a united Europe, he opposed dreams of world government. His more local versions of building the human ideal through reform was based on guild socialism in its building of webs of new groups. At base, Durkheim's ethic of the person is bound up with a set of abstract ideals encapsulated in the French Revolution as liberty, equality, fraternity—ideals, as emphasized in *The Division of Labour*, that are open to a multitude of disputes.

Social conflicts are best resolved, Durkheim argued, through the solidarity of citizens' attachment to a particular political society built on webs of authentic relationships. But this solidarity is inevitably crippled by class divisions that compromise human rights, despite lip service paid to them and to the human ideal. What is lacking is a genuinely democratic framework of collective argument. He envisioned new occupational groups kick-starting a process of reform by creating a forum for negotiating a way through disputes over justice in social and economic relations and for

working to translate key abstract ideals into a coherent and practical moral code.

The Politics of the Future

The Elemental Forms of Religious Life comes with an account of how the French Revolution's effervescent energies created a secular religion, complete with its own ritual and symbolism. But the conclusion comes with concern with the limitations of ritual and symbolism in a present-day crisis, and instead looks to a new moment of effervescence to regenerate social and moral life through an upsurge of idealism. Moreover, in a talk about his book in 1914, Durkheim concludes by noting fundamental social forces on the move, locates them among the working classes, and identifies them with aspirations to justice. In writing a few years later on the politics of the future, he reflects on the experiences of the war but above all in concern with an issue central to *The Division of Labour*'s problematic of a modern crisis.

In discussing how the old regime's already declining guilds were abolished without a search for an alternative, he sees the French Revolution as posing an issue taken up in the socialist movement, increasingly absorbing politics and brought to a head by the war. This issue is the need to recognize economic life's social character and achieve its proper social organization. The war swept aside individualistic economic dogmas and showed that industries run for private profit could be transformed into public services. But a basic impact of war's daily traumatic experiences was a renewed, intensified sense of the social, an awareness unlikely merely to fade away but rather pointing to a postwar politics dominated by the issue of how, rather than whether, to develop a social organization of the economy. The working out of such a development would be determined by a future politics, not by his or anyone's concocting blueprints of the good society. Nevertheless, Durkheim foresaw certain aspects of this development. An example is his argument, made in a lecture immediately after completing *The Division of Labour*'s manuscript and concluding the second edition's preface, about tackling present-day economic inequalities by developing forms of collective yet decentralized ownership and control of wealth through the new, reformist occupational groups.

It remains unclear whether Durkheim hoped to moralize capitalism or to go beyond it altogether. What is clear is that the uncertain process of economic and social reform would be worked out through democratic politics grappling with the fresh challenges that, he insisted in *The Division of Labour*, would always provide a field wide open to our efforts to build a better commonwealth.

Influences and Trajectories

Marcel Fournier (2012) provides a guide to the many personal as well as impersonal influences on Durkheim. Jean Terrier (2011) situates Durkheim's work within French debates since the eighteenth century over a social conceptualization of the political. Susan Stedman Jones (2001) brings out its roots in French nineteenth-century republican and socialist movements. Durkheim's vision was in a developing theoretical effort, based in practical political struggles, to anchor the freedom of individuals in a solidarity of collective life and in what Durkheim's left-wing philosophical hero, Charles Renouvier, called a society of persons. Part of the reason for Durkheim's hostility to Marxism was his attachment to republican and socialist ideals of a human *patrie* as evolved and continuing to evolve in France itself.

A history of the development of Durkheim's reputation would require many volumes. The view of Durkheim as a political conservative, widespread in the English-speaking world in the 1950s and 1960s, was killed off during a period of sustained critique by writers such as Anthony Giddens (1972) and Mike Gane (1992). In France, Durkheim's followers formed a network round his nephew and closest collaborator, Marcel Mauss, and for a while managed to hold the fort as the French school of sociology. This effort collapsed after World War II under the onslaught of rival forces such as Marxism, Weberianism, and American-style empiricism. But Durkheim had become sufficiently engrained in collective memory to continue as a diffuse general influence. There has also been a recent, more specific revival of interest in his thought, in competing claims over his republican legacy. These interests are discussed by Derek Robbins (2011) in an essay sketching out the political transformations of Durkheimianism in France from the 1900s to the present day. At the same time, such politically

engaged disputes have come with a growth of scholarly research, in particular studies, discoveries of lost manuscripts, and the current preparation of the first annotated critical edition of Durkheim's works.

William Watts Miller

See also [Alienation](#); [Civil Society](#); [Comte, Auguste](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [French Political Thought](#); [Global Civil Society](#); [Guild Socialism](#); [Republicanism](#); [Socialism](#); [State, Theories of the](#)

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Economics and Political Thought

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Economics and Political Thought

In the late eighteenth century, the scientific methods of inquiry became the preferred means of studying the production, exchange, distribution, and consumption of goods and services, thus giving birth to the modern use of the term *economics*. These activities take place within a political framework and presuppose a political infrastructure. It is therefore not surprising that many if not most political theorists at some point turn their attention to these issues. Indeed, many of the seminal thinkers of modern political thought are also recognized among economists as laying the groundwork for their studies.

The close relationship between politics and economics has long been recognized; that they can be separated is a relatively new idea. To find Aristotle's treatment of topics that would today fall under the heading of economics, such as private property, the distribution of goods, currency, exchange, and wealth, one would have to turn to his political treatises, *The Nicomachean Ethics* and *The Politics*. Much of Aristotle's writing in this regard was in response to the communal ownership spoken of by Socrates in Plato's most famous political dialogue, *The Republic*, the subject of which is justice. That Aristotle and those influenced by him such as Thomas Aquinas should take an interest in economics should not surprise us insofar as these thinkers, much like modern thinkers, were concerned with the issue of justice. When is an exchange just? What is the most just form of distribution of goods and services? The typical name given to studies animated by these questions prior to the advent of modernity was *political*

economy. And those who studied it were typically moral and political philosophers.

With the Enlightenment came the compartmentalization of disciplines, and economics was among the first to partition itself off. That it is part of a larger whole, however, is often felt. It is difficult to consider any political theory serious if it leaves untouched the management of the economy. At the same time, economic theories can hardly avoid being political theories simultaneously because economics, like politics, is animated by the pursuit of a common good. A brief sketch of the history of modern economic theory is enough to see the close relationship it has with modern political thought.

Liberalism and the Laws of Nature

Economics as it is understood today is the product of the Enlightenment project to advance knowledge using the tools and methods of science. Enlightenment thinkers sought to uncover laws of nature that, once discovered, could be utilized to improve the conditions of human life. This desire applied to more than just the exterior world; rules of human behavior were also the subject of study. Thomas Hobbes, for instance, taught that an improved polity could be built upon the human passion of fear. Other thinkers disagreed with Hobbes's reliance on fear, but they agreed that a better understanding of the human passions could serve as the basis for new political and economic institutions.

In perhaps the most well-known Enlightenment treatise claiming to have discovered certain laws of nature as they apply to humans, John Locke claims that private property entails individuals' lives, liberties, and estates and that the purpose of government is to protect that property. By describing humans in terms of property, Locke's *Second Treatise of Government* argues that humans are motivated primarily by their self-interest not simply to avoid harm, but to make better the world in which they live. Through their labor they cultivate nature's raw materials, giving them ever-extending value.

Locke and other Enlightenment figures wrote at a time when nations formed their economic policies under the influence of mercantilism. The ideas that composed this theory were generally adhered to from the sixteenth century through most of the eighteenth century and were intended to help build and then protect the interests of European nation-states. A general assumption existed that the world's wealth was fixed and that nations could only increase their own share of it at the expense of others. Nations thus exercised extensive control over agriculture, manufacturing, and foreign trade. They also sought to expand upon their wealth through colonization outside of Europe, an activity that raised many ethical questions for politics and international law. In response to the heavy control exercised by nations under the mercantilist approach, Enlightenment thinkers emphasized the importance of individual liberty, thus giving rise to the set of ideas that have come to be known as liberalism.

As early as the mid-seventeenth century, William Petty, influenced by thinkers such as Francis Bacon and Hobbes, advocated the use of empirical methods and induction for studying money and other economic themes. And in 1755, Richard Cantillon published an essay that treated economics the same way Isaac Newton treated physics. The economy, he argued, operated by way of invisible laws that could be defined through empirical study. Cantillon emphasized the importance of the market and entrepreneurs.

Physiocracy, often regarded as the first school of modern economic theory, also took aim at mercantilist policies, particularly those of eighteenth-century France under Louis XIV's minister of finance, Jean Baptiste Colbert. Like Petty and Cantillon, physiocrats sought laws of nature that governed economic relations. Better to follow these unwritten laws, physiocrats argued, than oppose them with the man-made laws of mercantilism. In particular, they argued that national wealth should be measured by productive labor and not by the accumulation of precious metals or the balance of trade. Physiocrats are often noted for their emphasis on agriculture, which has a closer relationship to nature than manufacturing. The literal meaning of physiocracy is "rule of nature." All laws and regulations should be aimed at allowing individuals to pursue their interests insofar as doing so is the natural course of promoting the common

good. It is the physiocrats that coined the term *laissez-faire*, literally meaning to allow. In some ways, however, the physiocrats fell short of the full Enlightenment spirit. Though they praised individualism, they remained devoted to the monarchical regime. And their emphasis on agriculture ran counter to the culture of industrialization that was emerging in Europe in the eighteenth century.

The Rise of Capitalism

The first systematic economic treatise written in the full spirit of the Enlightenment was Adam Smith's widely influential *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. Some argue that what is revolutionary in Smith's economics is not what is new but what is dropped from the older Aristotelian approach, which takes its cues from a conception of man's final good. Smith is more concerned with the means rather than the ends of economic life, a concern that, in part, places his work within the Enlightenment tradition. Liberalism's defense of individual liberty found one of its most enduring champions in Smith, who reasoned that economic liberty, not central authority, is the best means of producing wealth. Smith thus laid the foundation for what we now call capitalism, generally defined as an economic system of private enterprise where development is spurred by the reinvestment of profits.

Smith's ideas are similar to those of his friend David Hume. Both believed a new, empirical understanding of economics was a necessary component of political change. Though Hume never wrote a treatise on the subject, several of his essays prescribe economic policies designed to alleviate the human condition and promote human liberty. What is more, Hume recognized that the promotion of economic liberty would have implications for political liberty—the two would reinforce one another. Hume thus bears some resemblance to the physiocrats, but rather than seek laws of economics based upon the character of the natural world, Hume focused on the nature of man, particularly selfish inclinations.

Like Hume's, Smith's economic theory is founded upon mankind's selfish inclinations. Importantly, *The Wealth of Nations* was not Smith's first major work; his *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, first published in 1759, was also

very successful. How the two works fit together is the source of some controversy among scholars, but the selfish nature of humans is a key element of both. The first sentence of that earlier work seems to purposely call to mind Hobbes and draw a distinction: “How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him. . . .” In contrast to Hobbes and Locke, Smith acknowledges that humans, through their inclination to sympathize, are social animals. But in making this claim, Smith is certainly not looking back to Aristotle, who referred to humans as political animals. Indeed, Smith remains very much a modern in his concern for material well-being.

Likewise, *The Wealth of Nations* famously argues that the pursuit of self-interest is what makes for a strong economy in a free market that directs selfish inclinations. General laws that attempt to regulate the economy do not yield the highest potential outcome. Better to let the invisible hand of the market guide humans’ pursuit of their self-interest. People will do what they believe is best for themselves anyway; the statesman’s task is to create an institutional environment that will allow this natural tendency to work for rather than against the common good. The themes of liberalism found their fullest economic expression here: allow individuals to advance their own good and they will not only benefit themselves, but also each other in turn. In this scheme, reason is to serve and not control the passions. Smith was not, however, the devotee of pure laissez-faire capitalism as he is sometimes erroneously portrayed. In elaborating his theory and, in particular, showing the benefits of a division of labor, Smith recognizes the likelihood of a large laboring class with monotonous and tedious tasks. Seeing no theoretical solution, Smith forewarned governments that policies will have to be adopted to ease the conditions of this working class. Unlike later political thinkers, Smith did not subscribe to the idea that human nature could be changed in order to avoid the undesirable results of nature’s invisible hand.

Classical Economics

The legacy of Smith’s economic theory and its political consequences can hardly be understated. The century following the publication of *The Wealth*

of Nations was dominated by the elaboration of its themes, particularly that of liberty, and is known as the classical period of economic thought. While most of the leading thinkers of this period did little to question the philosophic and political thought at the foundation of Smith's work, many helped to clarify the latent political ideas at work in Smith's teaching, the work of Jean-Baptiste Say being a good example.

In other cases, however, disagreements arose. For instance, Jeremy Bentham's 1789 *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* was written in the same Enlightenment spirit as Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, but prescribed a more active government. Bentham agreed with Smith's emphasis on individual self-interest as the basis for economic growth but was not convinced that an invisible hand could harmonize private interest into a larger public good. Smith's reliance on nature did little to explain criminal actions so evidently against the public good. Instead, Bentham taught that the business of the legislator was to deliberately intervene so as to bring about a union between private and public goods. He referred to his union as utility, and he believed it could be quantified and therefore measured formulaically. Once the mathematics of utilitarianism was known, governments could better regulate the economy so as to maximize utility. Where Smith had praised liberty, Bentham held up equality insofar as utility was to be measured by the sum of individual interests regardless of class.

Differences aside, both Smith and Bentham were animated by the spirit of optimism so prevalent in Enlightenment thinking, but this optimism could last only so long. The project of social progress through reason must have natural limits, and failure to observe those limits could end up creating multiple new problems. Such was the thinking of Thomas Malthus who predicted that the world's population would soon outpace the food supply. Deliberate effort on the part of government to alleviate the plight of the poor would only exacerbate this reality by increasing the price of food without a similar increase in volume. It would also encourage those who could hardly afford it to procreate. Nature has provided means of keeping the population in check, and these checks should be allowed to work their course. Malthus's ideas had an important influence on Charles Darwin's study of biology. Social Darwinism thus has a precursor in Malthus's economic thought.

Classical economics' belief in progress would be renewed in the thought of John Stuart Mill. The generation immediately preceding Mill, including Bentham, David Ricardo, and Mill's father James, engaged in economic analysis in the classical mode as a way of addressing policy issues of the day. In doing so, they contributed to economic thought by way of elaboration of a given theory. Unlike Smith, they were not philosophically minded. This, however, cannot be said of the younger Mill whose various writings, including those on economics, were animated by deeper concerns. He famously held that no economic question can be decided on the basis of economic criteria alone. To do so is to ignore the noneconomic aspects of human life. This approach has much to do with Mill's complexity. His brand of utilitarianism refused to count all pleasures as equal, unlike the Benthamite philosophy he was raised on. He is in general a defender of the free market, yet he allows exceptions to the laissez-faire doctrine for the common good. He is a strong advocate for individual liberty, but not at the expense of human equality. And though he saw government as generally inefficient, he was open to the possibility of socialism. Economic policy could not be decided on the basis of a single formula; rather, the fuller picture must be seen including the possibility of future progress in terms of both individual development and the common good.

Historicism and Scientific Socialism

Karl Marx was a contemporary of Mill's and even spent a large portion of his life in London. But Marx brought to his study of classical economics a heavy dose of historicism from his homeland of Germany. Historicism was not limited to Germany, but it found its most fertile ground there in the nineteenth century. Rather than seeking laws of nature, as was the common Enlightenment practice, historicists answered political and economic questions in terms of a process of rationalization over the course of time. This process led to an embrace of the state as the product of history. Liberty is realized by the individual not in contradiction to the state, but in alliance with it. Those who sought universal laws of nature as guides for political and economic activity did so in vain; human behavior was the product of the historical contingencies of a given political association. German historicism reached its peak in the work of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, who understood history in terms of conflicting *Geists*—ideas or a general

spirit among a people—continuously evolving and made known through political associations such as the state.

What made historicism a contagious theory was the growing dissatisfaction of economic disparities associated with classical economic thought, exacerbated by the industrial revolution. Whereas classical economists tended to argue against policies aimed at alleviating the condition of the poor and working classes, historicists promoted better conditions. Though historicists were not without socialist allies, their scholarly case lacked the sense of objectivity that classical economists enjoyed due to the quantitative evidence the latter could produce.

In Marx, socialists found a historicist argument with a scientific appearance. With the help of Friedrich Engels, Marx provided an interpretation of history designed to challenge the classical economics' reliance on reason to discover economic laws, and he intended to do so on classical economists' own turf. For Marx, the mainsprings of historical change were economic; more specifically, history is moved by the means of production necessary for satisfying the material requirements of human life. His argument resembles that of Hegel, but rather than understanding history as the collisions, merges, and triumphs of Geists, Marx sees it as struggles between economic classes. Politics was the result of a dominant class subjugating the others with laws and included fictions designed to encourage submission. He thus calls religion and the morality derived from it the opium of the masses intended to maintain existing economic conditions.

Like Hegel, Marx predicted a final, rational end of history, though he of course foresaw a different end than his German predecessor. Where Hegel saw the state as the rational end, Marx prophesied that a classless society was coming. Much of his work called upon the working class to unite and help usher in the final stage of history. This is most evident in the *Communist Manifesto*, a relatively short pamphlet cowritten with Engels. Here Marx lays out his production-based theory of history and describes the present basis of political society as a clash between the oppressed proletariat class who labors under the exploitive bourgeois class and the bourgeoisie. The latter own the means of production, the capital, but it is the

former that provides the labor, and while it is labor that gives value to the product, it is only those with capital who profit. This arrangement, Marx says, has achieved massive amounts of production and has even subjected nature's powers to mankind's purposes. Ironically, the success of the bourgeoisie threatens to undermine their project insofar as it requires equipping the proletariat with revolutionary tools. What is more, it has primed the world for revolution through its incessant drive for new markets, which has made the world more cosmopolitan. The revolution of the proletariat, when it comes, will be global, ending in a classless world where finally the means of production are held in common.

The more scientific backing for Marx's theory comes later in his multivolume work *Das Kapital*, subtitled *A Critique of Political Economy*. Here Marx, again with the help of Engels, makes his case for his labor theory of value, his answer to the age-old question of the justice of exchange. Since Aristotle, thinkers have understood a good's value relative to the number of other goods it can trade for. Money of course facilitates this exchange. Marx believed that a good's true value was based upon the labor that went into producing it. Workers were thus exploited when employers compensated them for only a portion of their labor. This theory quickly grows complicated when one considers the differences between individual productivity and skills. Many have argued that Marx's labor theory of value allows him to chastise all income, even that earned through means other than labor, as exploitive. But this is simply to note that his economic writing cannot be separated from his political thought; indeed, it serves as its foundation.

Economics and Political Thought Today

Smith's theory of the invisible hand and Marx's economic historicism each have been enormously influential since the original publication of their respective books. No doubt their influences have pushed in different directions. Contemporary political thinkers find themselves facing the same question as Aristotle in *The Politics*: should property—in modern terms the means of production—be held privately or in common. The question is fundamental because of its relation to justice and the common good and

therefore contains within it implications for people's way of life under a political regime.

In the twentieth century, several thinkers and schools have emerged animated by this fundamental question. Many of their contributions have been interwoven with political theory and have had an influence on public policies. Among the most important is John Maynard Keynes, who famously taught that governments could bolster and grow their economies by using taxation and public expenditures. By taking an active part in influencing the aggregate demand of the economy, governments could secure and even raise wages without causing unemployment. Although a defense of capitalism against communism, this theory was a significant break from the classical notion of an invisible hand. Ironically, defense of classical economics contra the British Keynes was initially centered in Austria. Notable students of the Austrian school, such as Joseph Schumpeter and Friedrich Hayek, disagreed with the economic thought that encouraged government intervention. Rather, they favored the classical approach of understanding the signs of the market and allowing individuals to act upon those signals. This approach was more conducive to protecting human liberty. A similar critique has been made against Keynes in America by Milton Friedman, leader of the so-called Chicago school of economics.

Keynes and his critics represent competing sides of a fundamental political disagreement that is as old as Plato and Aristotle. As different as the work of contemporary economists appears from political inquiry, they consistently provide evidence that production, exchange, distribution, and consumption are issues bound up with justice and the common good. We therefore have good reason to suspect that economics will continue to be a relevant and even indispensable issue for political theorists.

Jerome C. Foss

See also [Capitalism](#); [Communism](#), [Varieties of](#); [Friedman, Milton](#); [Hayek, Friedrich](#); [Keynes, John Maynard](#); [Liberty](#), [Theories of](#); [Market Socialism](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Mill, John Stuart](#); [Neoconservatism](#); [Neoliberalism](#); [Physiocracy](#); [Schumpeter, Joseph](#); [Scottish Enlightenment](#); [Smith, Adam](#)

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Education and Political Thought

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Education and Political Thought

The relation between education and political thought has a long history, going back to Plato and Aristotle. More recently, as B. S. Turner (2006) has noted, early French sociological thinking regarding the development of a secular modernist society focused on the importance of education, as in the work of Émile Durkheim (1858–1917), who lectured in both pedagogy and sociology. Much later, Karl Mannheim (1893–1947) would render education central to his view of social reconstruction and democratic planning. Many would argue that education is not a neutral enterprise. This conception, though generally associated with the work of Paulo Freire (1921–97) and people he inspired, has been the mantra of several other movements.

Over the last thirty years we have been exposed to thinking about education just as strongly connected with the market ideology, commonly referred to as neoliberal (e.g., Chester Finn Jr., b. 1944). Education is seen as an object of private consumption rather than as a public good, with responsibility for learning being placed on the individual. This view contrasts with notions of education as a democratic public good, associated with a variety of thinkers, notably John Dewey (1859–1952) in his conception of a democratic education for the creation of a democratic society. Dewey's notion, combined with insights from critical theory and other sources, has more recently been taken up by Henry A. Giroux (b. 1943) regarding the need to defend public spaces against the onslaught of neoliberal commodification. Giroux (2005) broadened the notion of education to include several sites of

public pedagogy, ranging from schools to cinemas and youth entertainment areas, as well as the consumer culture and military ideology. He analyzes the devastating effects and terror of neoliberal policies and argues for universities, schools, and other learning agencies to serve as democratic public spheres. Michael Apple (b. 1942) argues for the democratization of the curriculum, which he presents as a site of contestation mirroring other sites of struggle such as the state and the domain of textbook publishing. In *Official Knowledge* (1993), Apple details the economic, political, and ideological processes that enable specific groups' knowledge to become official while other groups' knowledge is popular. Over the past two decades, he has critically examined the social movements that internationally exercise leadership in educational reform. He has also analyzed progressive reforms that can provide models for critically democratic alternatives. In her 2011 book, *A Dissident Voice*, Antonia Darder (b. 1952) has engaged with issues of cultural democracy and with notions of culture and power concerning conditions of schooling in disenfranchised and racialized communities.

Most of these writers are exponents of critical pedagogy. One major exponent, Peter McLaren (b. 1948), defines critical pedagogy in his 1994 work as being “fundamentally concerned with the centrality of politics and power in our understanding of” education and learning (167). Critical pedagogy is very much inspired by Freire, although there are many others who stress the political nature of education, including Lorenzo Milani (1923–67) and his students at Barbiana (students pushed out of the public school system). Their *Letter to a Teacher* (Borg, Cardona, and Caruana 2009) is a classic concerning the relationship between social class and educational achievement. Among other things, this narrative emphasizes the collective dimension of teaching and learning and the class basis of social selection as manifest in selective public and private systems. This work anticipates writings associated with critical pedagogy and the new sociology of education, the latter born of a series of writings (Young 1971) that signaled an approach indicating the ideological basis and class biases of schooling. This demonstration of the affinities between the culture of middle-class homes and that of the school, and schools' traditional rupture with working- and peasant-class cultures, resonate with Pierre Bourdieu's (1930–2002) writings concerning the school's cultural arbitrary and the

issues of habitus, as well as cultural and social capital as determinants of educational success or failure.

This kind of critique would normally be found in Marxist political thought, though Milani and Bourdieu were not Marxist. Neither was Basil Bernstein (1924–2000), who forged strong connections between pedagogical approaches (classification and framing of knowledge), linguistic codes, and social-class locations. Paula Allman (1944–2011) was one educational writer who did much to engage directly with Marx's own writing regarding ideology and the production of consciousness, dialectical thinking, education's role within the base-superstructure relation, and education's role in the reproduction of the social conditions enabling the ruling class to retain and consolidate power. Marxist thinking on education is featured in the work of the structuralist philosophers Louis Althusser (1918–90) and Nicos Poulantzas (1936–79), and it explained the socially reproductive function of education in capitalist society, for Christian Baudelot (b. 1938) and Roger Establet (b. 1938) in France and Samuel Bowles (b. 1939) and Herbert Gintis (b. 1940) in the United States. Key topics include the schools' inculcation of the bourgeois ideology and the correspondence between social relations in different school tracks and/or streams and in the different types of work to which the tracks are likely to lead. Marxism has also informed scholars engaged in ethnographic work regarding how students resist the dominant culture in schools and thereby secure working-class jobs (Corrigan 1979; Willis 1977)

One Marxist writer who wielded much influence on the educational field is Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937). His concepts of hegemony, the intellectuals' roles, the factory-council theory, and the integral state have become central concepts in discussions of the relationship between education and power. Gramsci views education in its broadest context as incorporating the elements of the hegemonic apparatus. Gramsci's pedagogical philosophy is the pedagogy of praxis, entailed by his philosophy of praxis. Other issues concern the role of education in the integral state and the heuristic value of analyzing the distinction between political and civil societies

A extensive debate has ensued concerning the connection between education and the state. Roger Dale (b. 1940) analyses the complex relationships occurring between capitalism, state, and education. Drawing on Claus Offe, he analyses the process whereby education plays two key roles in the capitalist political economy: first, in legitimating class society by teaching that inequality results from our different abilities, and second, by providing training and human capital for national and global economic ends. Dale argues that the ways social tensions are felt and addressed through education shape citizens' understanding and experience of the world. Other authors such as M. Carnoy and H. Levin (1985) and A. Green (1990) have also analyzed education in the context of the state's legitimation and accumulation functions and its varying formations.

The nonneutral, political quality of education lies at the core of a long tradition of educational provision, beginning in the early twentieth century, known as independent working-class education (IWCE), manifested, for example, in the work of the Plebs League and the labor colleges in Britain and Australia. This movement represented an attempt at a break with bourgeois culture by means of Marxian-inspired classes and schools, workmen's colleges, alternative libraries, and sporting events (Waugh 2009).

The critique of capitalist education and more recently, neoliberal education has come from various quarters. Feminist writings have served to expose the contribution that education makes to the consolidation of patriarchy as well as its potential to challenge patriarchy both within and outside formal institutional settings. Sara Delamont (b. 1947), for instance, has argued in *Feminist Sociology* (2003) that both sexes are diminished by institutional sexism in all sectors of the educational system, reflected equally in the dearth of women in science and engineering and the lack of men training as infant teachers or nurses. Jane Thompson (b. 1946) has applied a feminist critique to the curriculum and practice of women's education and adult education, focusing on women's access to education, the political aspects of women's lived experiences, and the changing conditions of women in global capitalism (Thompson 2000). She has exemplified the linking of women's activism to both educational change and to wider social and political movements concerned with fighting inequalities. Similarly,

Kathleen Lynch (b. 1951) contributed to feminist thinking on politics and education through her work on the intersectionalities of injustice, examining ways by which gendered problems of recognition are interwoven with issues of redistribution and representation. She has also highlighted the importance of relationality and emotions for understanding the dynamics of injustice in education and has developed the concept of affective equality to explain how carelessness is a key equality problem for society and for educators. Angela Miles's (b. 1946) main theoretical contribution to educational politics is the concept of integrative feminisms and multicentred (as opposed to decentred) social movements (Miles 1996). She draws on Adrienne Rich's (1929–2012) integrative feminist perspective on education that recognizes the specificity of women's history, interests, and value. Like Rich, Miles stresses the importance of women's being able to recognize and name the world very differently from the way men have done—rather than simply having equal access to male education.

Of particular importance is the work of Mary Belenky and colleagues (1986), who focused on how women learn and what is distinctive about their learning, drawing their insights from responses to questions posed to 135 female interviewees. Despite some average differences between men and women, the five levels of increasingly complex learning uncovered by these women authors from their female students apply to and offer insights for men as well. In Italy, Anna Maria Piussi's (b. 1944) pedagogy transcends an exclusive paradigm of victimization of and discrimination against women by valuing, especially through education, women's difference and differences in general to help individual women gain awareness of themselves and to discover their voices as woman engaged in relationships with others.

The author bell hooks (b. 1952) brings an African American perspective into the debate on women and education by foregrounding the issue of race and ethnicity in this context. In addition to hooks, a whole body of work, notably articles in the journal *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, addresses such concerns. A towering figure is the African American writer and sociologist W. E. B. Du Bois (1868–1963), who wrote extensively on the empowerment of black students by means of an education that enables them to see themselves through their own eyes rather than through the white

perspectives provided by traditional education. In *The Souls of Black Folk* ([1903] 1961), Du Bois famously rejected as demeaning the willingness of fellow black educator Booker T. Washington to have African American students restricted to pre-collegiate education.

More recently, the writings of George Sefa Dei (b. 1954) formulate an integrative antiracist education, encompassing race, class, gender, sexuality, and disability interactions through a race-centric lens. Dei (1998) examines black youth disengagement from school as what he calls a push out problem, developing the concept of Africentric schooling as a countervision to conventional white-centric education and promoting anticolonial thinking in education and the importance of indigenous knowledge.

Closely related to the ethnicity-education dynamic is thought associated with postcolonial and decolonizing studies in education. The term *postcolonialism* refers to an all-embracing phenomenon of struggle against processes of domination that had their origin in European colonization. These processes extend beyond the period of direct colonization to take on new forms, notably those of neocolonialism, dependency, and the intensification of globalization. As noted in Wa Thiong'O Ngugi (1981), as a site of struggle, education has constituted a key vehicle for the colonization of the mind, and it can become a powerful vehicle for its decolonization.

There is also a body of literature on education connected with the disability movement. It eschews the medical-deficit model and adopts the social-constructivist approach emphasizing alternative ways of defining a problematical situation. Articles in such outlets as the journal *Disability & Society* address issues of theory, and especially of policy regarding disabilities. Writers such as Susan Peters (b. 1947) in the United States have drawn on Freire to explore empowering pedagogical insights in this context. The literature exposes forms of disabling environments and education and explores possibilities for an enabling education for all. In this view, the institutional and cultural barriers are regarded as disabling, difference is valued, and the unique strengths of individuals are emphasized. Contributors such as Mike Oliver (1990) also shift the focus from individual deficits to disabling environments when reversing a series of

conventional deficit questions regarding what is awry with the relationship between the individual and the environment. As age is often regarded as a disabling conditioning, there is a growing body of theoretical and empirical work, including that of youth activists themselves. For example, in their 2002 work *Take Action: A Guide to Active Citizenship*, Craig and Marc Kielburger have called into question age-based restrictions on human rights and voice.

The theme of inclusion is not confined to relations among humans but extends to human-earth relations, often in the context of ecopedagogy. This holistic approach to pedagogy conceives of people as primarily relational beings acting in communion not only with other humans, but also with all other beings within the cosmos. The work of Edmund O'Sullivan (b. 1938), drawing on Thomas Berry, is representative (see O'Sullivan 1999). The work of American Indian writer and activist Winona LaDuke also exemplifies this approach; see, for example, her book *All Our Relations: Native Struggles for Land and Life* (1999).

Finally, a large body of work deals with policy making in education, a good example being the writing of Stephen J. Ball (b. 1950). Ball's major contribution has been the development of a method of analysis—the policy cycle—that combines Foucauldian theory and ethnographic methods to offer a set of starting points for theorizing and researching educational policy processes. Ball's earlier work focused on the micropolitics of the school, using political theory to develop a conflict model of school organization. This perspective overlaps with case studies of youth and student participation in policy making as reported in such outlets as the e-journal *Children, Youth and Environments*.

Peter Mayo

See also [Citizenship](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Dewey, John](#); [Durkheim, Émile](#); [Ethnicity and Political Thought](#); [Gramsci, Antonio](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#)

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Eighteenth-Century Political Thought

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Eighteenth-Century Political Thought

Political thought in the eighteenth century covered a broad spectrum ranging from advocates of revolution and democracy on the left, to proponents of moderate reform and limited constitutional government in the center, to defenders of throne and altar and counterrevolution on the right. Historians sometimes speak of the long eighteenth century as stretching from the Glorious Revolution in Britain (1688–90) to the French Revolution of 1789 and its aftermath, ending with the final defeat of Napoleon in 1815. There is some merit in this approach as far as the political thought of the century is concerned since it conveniently encompasses three major revolutions, in Britain (1688), the United States (1776), and France (1789). Also, it begins with a crucially important and influential political work, John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*, which was published anonymously in 1689, although, as Peter Laslett has shown, almost certainly written in its near entirety a decade earlier. In it, Locke sets out his systematic justification for a limited form of constitutional government based on the rights of individuals and the protection of private property, a position that was to prove enormously popular in the eighteenth century, particularly after 1750. Locke's rejection of political despotism in favor of a contractualist view of political society that included a right of citizens to rebel if the terms of the contract were breached proved to be very attractive to many of the American founding fathers and the French philosophes, although the actual extent of his influence on them remains a matter of some debate among scholars of the

period. Locke also defended religious toleration in his *A Letter Concerning Toleration* ([1689] 2010) and empiricism in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* ([1690] 1959), both of which were very widely read and admired in the eighteenth century. The latter argues against the traditional concepts of innate ideas and original sin—and in apparent contradiction of his assumptions in his treatises on government—in favor of the mind conceived of as a blank slate, according to which knowledge is acquired by means of sensory perceptions. A Puritan by birth and brought up as a Christian, Locke nonetheless claimed that the state should tolerate a range of religious beliefs, a position that was highly congenial to the mainstream Enlightenment in Europe and the United States, which was averse to religious dogmatism and clerical authority. Although there were some atheists among the philosophes, such as Julien Offrey de La Mettrie, the Baron d'Holbach, and Denis Diderot, most were deists like Jean le Rond d'Alembert and François-Marie Arouet Voltaire who attacked established religious institutions and beliefs in favor of a minimalistic natural religion. This basic outlook was echoed by one of the leading representatives of the German Enlightenment, Gotthold Lessing, in his influential play *Nathan the Wise* ([1779] 2003), a defense of religious tolerance and pluralism.

The Enlightenment and the French Revolution

Although traditional religious and political beliefs by no means vanished in the wake of Locke, radical new ideas arose in the eighteenth century to challenge them, and these in turn provoked new defenses of traditional views. The Enlightenment was a broad movement of reform that swept through Europe and the United States in the eighteenth century challenging many of the basic ideas and practices of the religious and political establishments of the ancien régime. The scientific method of Isaac Newton and Francis Bacon was taken by the Enlightenment's proponents as the model for the systematic and reliable acquisition of knowledge in contrast to the obscurity of traditional metaphysics and orthodox religious beliefs, which science had disproved or displaced in the eyes of many. Faith in natural science as the best means for improving human well-being was very widespread during the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. Traditional beliefs and practices that failed to meet this standard ought to be discarded, according to the philosophes.

One of the best overall expressions of this outlook is d'Alembert's *Preliminary Discourse to the Encyclopedia of Diderot*, published between 1751 and 1772 (1963). The *Encyclopédie*, coedited with Diderot, was an ambitious compendium of knowledge published in France, comprising twenty-eight volumes, with 71,818 articles and 3,129 illustrations, including contributions by many of the leading philosophes of the day such as Voltaire, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the Baron de Montesquieu, Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot, and the Baron d'Holbach. This controversial and influential project was deliberately subversive of many traditional religious and political beliefs, eventually leading to its official suppression in 1759. In his *Preliminary Discourse*, d'Alembert outlines a naturalistic and secular method for organizing the vast amount of knowledge that he and Diderot had assembled, which he divided into three basic categories: memory, reason, and imagination. He also paid tribute to important innovators such as René Descartes, Newton, Bacon, and Locke in the progressive search for a new methodology for acquiring knowledge that he hoped would give mankind the power to independently shape and direct its own destiny.

There was little consensus among the Enlightenment's advocates on the ideal form of government. Locke's *Second Treatise* favored a mixed state combining a popular assembly that made laws with a limited constitutional monarchy that executed them. The German philosopher Immanuel Kant also favored a mixed form of government that was liberal and republican but not strictly democratic (in the sense of the direct democracy favored by Rousseau) since he believed that the latter posed a threat to individual liberty. Voltaire and d'Alembert spoke for the majority of the philosophes in France when they defended enlightened despotism as the most effective means to elevate the masses and promote human progress. In the United States, Thomas Paine attacked both of these views in his best-selling pamphlet *Common Sense* ([1776] 2012), which argues for a republican form of government independent of Britain. The democrat Rousseau put his faith in the people in his book *The Social Contract* ([1762] 1939), which was unpopular with most of his fellow philosophes and was banned for its subversive defense of the sovereignty of the general will and its perceived political attack on Christianity. However, it was both widely read and enormously influential among the generation of radicals who dominated politics during the French Revolution. For example, Maximilien

Robespierre was inspired by Rousseau's case for republicanism and popular sovereignty, a form of which he sought to implement in France (with disastrous results) despite Rousseau's clear assertion in *The Social Contract* that it applied only to small city-states. Unlike Rousseau, Paine lived to see the French Revolution, which he supported in his pamphlet *Rights of Man* ([1791–92] 2012) and as a member of the French National Convention. He was regarded as a supporter of the moderate Girondist faction of revolutionaries in the Convention, including the Marquis de Condorcet, one of the only philosophes who lived until the French Revolution. Both Paine and Condorcet were arrested and imprisoned in Paris in 1794 when the radical Jacobins, led by Robespierre, ruled France. Paine was released, unlike Condorcet, who wrote the most optimistic statement of the Enlightenment belief in progress, *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind* ([1795] 1993), just before he died in prison awaiting execution.

One of the leading theorists of the French Revolution was the Abbé Emmanuel Sieyès, who as a student at the Sorbonne had been influenced by Locke and the *Encyclopédistes*. He became famous as the author of an important and influential pamphlet published on the eve of the Revolution in 1789, titled “What Is the Third Estate?” Of the three traditional estates of ancien régime France (the clergy, the aristocracy, and the people), Sieyès argued that the third was the complete nation and alone should be sovereign. He was elected to the Estates-General as a deputy and played a major part in transforming it into the National Assembly of France in June 1789. He also helped to draft the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, embodying many of the most progressive political ideas of the eighteenth century, such as popular sovereignty, individual rights, and civic equality. The Declaration excluded women from the rights of citizenship (a view Sieyès shared), which prompted Olympe de Gouges to publish a Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen in 1791. In it, she asserts that the Revolution “will only take effect when all women become fully aware of their deplorable condition, and of the rights they have lost in society.” Like Paine and Condorcet, she was sympathetic to the Girondists and was executed during the Reign of Terror in 1793 for attacking Robespierre. Despite his support for the Girondists and against the odds, Sieyès narrowly escaped the guillotine and lived until 1836.

The Enlightenment was tainted by the violent excesses of the French Revolution, which many counterrevolutionary writers blamed on the steady corrosion of social and political order under the critical gaze of reason in the decades before 1789. An early example of this genre is *Reflections on the Revolution in France* by the Anglo-Irish statesman and writer Edmund Burke. This best-selling and highly influential attack on the French Revolution was published in 1790 (1987), well before the Jacobins came to power. Burke was a Whig politician who supported the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and was sympathetic to the claims of the American colonists against Britain but who recoiled against what he saw as a new, extreme form of revolution unleashed in France and directly inspired by writers such as Voltaire, Rousseau, and Turgot. Paine's *Rights of Man* and Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* ([1792] 1995) were both written as direct refutations of Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. They defended republicanism, reason, and religious toleration against Burke's case for piecemeal political reform, constitutional monarchy, hereditary aristocracy, and the indispensability of custom and tradition to the maintenance of social order and good government. Wollstonecraft also wrote *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* ([1792] 1995), a pioneering work of feminist thought that attacked the traditional institution of marriage and argued that women ought to have the same rights and opportunities as men. Her *Rights of Woman* has been as important to the history of feminism as Burke's *Reflections* has been to the history of conservatism.

In France the Jesuit priest Augustin Barruel read and admired Burke's *Reflections*. He took its arguments even further in his *Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism*, which were published in 1797. This lengthy best seller elaborates the case that the French Revolution was a secret conspiracy planned by the philosophes and executed by the Jacobins and the Bavarian Illuminati to overthrow

Christianity and monarchy in Europe. Burke read Barruel's *Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism* shortly before he died and was much impressed with it. A less influential and less conspiratorial attack on the principles of both the Enlightenment and the French Revolution appeared in Joseph de Maistre's *Considerations on France* ([1796] 1994), which offers

a providential argument that the violence of the Revolution was divine punishment for the sins of the Enlightenment.

Debates in the Emerging United States

In the United States, the American Revolution also spawned heated debates about the nature of politics and the principles of good government. In 1787 to 1788, a long series of influential political essays was pseudonymously published defending the American Revolution and endorsing the ratification of the proposed U.S. Constitution. The authors of these *Federalist Papers*—Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and above all, James Madison—drew heavily on Locke’s *Second Treatise*, as well on Montesquieu’s *The Spirit of the Laws* ([1748] 1989) and other eighteenth-century works by leading writers of the Scottish Enlightenment such as David Hume, to set out a case for a single, republican government for the United States with a president, based on representative democratic principles within a federal state, and involving a system of checks and balances designed to prevent political tyranny. They were opposed by the Anti-Federalists, who believed that the proposed Constitution risked creating a centralized form of disguised monarchy that threatened the economic and political diversity of the states that made it up. Beginning in the 1980s, scholars such as Donald Grinde and Bruce Johansen (1991) have marshaled evidence suggesting that another body of eighteenth-century political thought and practice—that of Native American confederacies such as the Iroquois—significantly shaped the political thought and practice of the U.S. Founders.

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See also [Burke, Edmund](#); [Conservatism](#); [Diderot, Denis](#); [Federalist Papers](#); [French Revolution](#), [Political Thought of the](#); [Hume, David](#); [Kant, Immanuel](#); [Liberalism](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Locke, John](#); [Maistre, Joseph](#); [Montesquieu, Baron de](#); [Paine, Thomas](#); [Radicalism](#); [Republicanism](#); [Sieyès, Emmanuel Joseph](#); [Rousseau, Jean-Jacques](#)

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Empire and Political Thought

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Empire and Political Thought

Empire means many different things and has been used in a number of ways in the long history of the term since the time of Roman imperium. In this entry, *empire* is used with the meaning it acquired as of the eighteenth century, to denote the conquest and rule of foreign lands, encompassing noncontiguous territories often far away from the imperial metropolis. The focus here will be on diverse responses to imperial expansion and rule by political thinkers from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth century. An earlier literature that had dealt with commenting on, justifying, or criticising imperial expansion in previous centuries, starting from that of Spain in the New World, cannot be discussed here (see Pagden 1995). Because, during the period focused upon, the greatest imperial formation was the British Empire, most of the political thought on empire and imperialism was produced by thinkers in the English-speaking world, though some important reflections came from elsewhere as well, as France, Holland, Belgium, Italy, Russia, the United States, Japan, and other countries conquered territories to augment their power. This entry focuses particularly on the insights and findings of scholarship published in the last decade or so.

Recent historiographical work has shown that there were important thinkers and currents of critique of imperial expansion even during the era that was usually seen as the apogee of Eurocentric universalist smugness. Sankar Muthu's major study of the subtle and powerful anti-imperialist writings of eighteenth-century thinkers such as Denis Diderot, Immanuel Kant, and Johann Gottfried Herder has enriched our understanding of Enlightenment

thought on human diversity significantly. Such thinkers questioned empire-building not only in terms of its impracticality or costliness to the metropolitan country, but also in terms of its unjustness. According to Muthu, these thinkers combined commitments to universal moral principles applicable to all people and societies with a belief in the existence of distinct and incommensurable ways of life and cultures that needed to be respected and preserved.

Another major historiographical contribution of the last decade came with Jennifer Pitts's work. She studied the attitudes towards empire of some major political thinkers in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Britain and France and compared them with the attitudes of two iconic mid-nineteenth-century liberal thinkers in the two countries, John Stuart Mill and Alexis de Tocqueville. Many significant differences between thinkers within each of these two groups notwithstanding, Pitts identifies a "turn to empire" in British and French liberalism by the mid-nineteenth century. While the earlier thinkers she discusses—Adam Smith, Edmund Burke, Jeremy Bentham, and Benjamin Constant—all displayed varying degrees of mistrust of imperialism and remarkable degrees of open-mindedness and respect for different cultures, according to Pitts, their liberal successors had, between the 1830s and the 1850s, made a *volte-face* and embraced empire and imperialism in ways that were unknown among the earlier group of thinkers. Though others (e.g., Mehta 1999) have seen this trend as inherent in the liberalism of the period, Pitts argues that during the mid-nineteenth century, the particular thinkers who emerged as iconic figures of liberalism—Mill and Tocqueville—embraced empire and imperialism for their different complex reasons.

One of the eighteenth-century thinkers praised (by both Pitts and many other students of empire) for his critical stance toward the British Empire was Adam Smith. Smith emerges as having displayed remarkable respect for cultural difference, and a refusal to dismiss different or less advanced societies as irrational. Smith instead accounted for the ways of living and customs of such less advanced societies as rational reactions to their material circumstances. He thus offered functional explanations of their customs and ways, rather than attributing these latter and their potential

defects to the mental state or condition of the peoples concerned (Pitts 2005, pp. 25–58).

Adam Smith has attracted much attention for his writings on the British Empire both in the *Wealth of Nations* of 1776 and in a secret memorandum on the options open to Britain in the midst of the American War of Independence in 1778. He famously wrote in the former work that Britain did not really possess an empire, but the project of an empire, and had to choose whether to make it real by creating an equal union with its colonies in America or to abandon the project. He was very critical of the monopolistic trade relationship that Britain had imposed on its colonies and blamed the “mercantilist system” for the mismanagement of that relationship. The gist of his argument was that Britain should either grant independence to the American colonies (which he conceded would be much resisted at home) or grant them equal representation according to the taxation they paid (which, he was adamant, would mean that in the long term the capital of the empire would have to move to North America).

Another thinker who emerges as a subtle critic of imperialist practices in much recent literature is Edmund Burke, who has received praise for, among other things, showing genuine concern about the British failure to show empathy with “the other,” the peoples the British ruled, be they Indians, Catholic Irish, or St. Eustatius Jews. Burke’s notorious persecution and impeachment of former governor Warren Hastings was only one of the manifestations of his concern for the mismanagement and oppression of the inhabitants of the Indian subcontinent. His speech in defense of Charles James Fox’s East India Bill (1783) was another famous instance. Burke also emerged as one of the most interesting critics of British attitudes toward the American rebels during the American War of Independence. His attempts at conciliation with the American rebels failed, but his arguments on how best to run the empire became classic references for subsequent debates for many decades.

A most interesting group of political thinkers, economists, and activists who were implicated with imperial thought and practice were the British utilitarians. One of them in particular, James Mill, has been taken to task by recent scholarship for his prejudiced treatment of Indian civilization and for

his abandonment of some of his Scottish predecessors' (primarily Adam Smith's) tolerant sociological explanations of observed differences, replacing them with his simplistic binary distinction between "civilized" and "barbarian" societies and attributing the failures of "barbarian" peoples to their mental states (Pitts 2005, pp. 123–33). On the other hand, Jeremy Bentham has been praised for his open-mindedness, and for his refusal to accept James Mill's binary distinction and scale of civilizations. Bentham emerges particularly favorably in Pitts's analysis, which differs from earlier scholarship on Bentham on colonies, notably by Donald Winch and Lea Campos Boralevi, who had pointed to the inconsistencies and shifts in Bentham's position on colonization and empire. Pitts interpreted Bentham as having displayed a more consistent antagonism to empire than other scholars would accept.

Next to his father, John Stuart Mill has come in for the harshest criticism of all (Mehta 1999; Pitts 2005). His acceptance of the binary distinction between "civilized" and "barbarian" peoples and its reductions is taken to task for having led to a particularly distorted picture of the whole "East" lumped together as a society of barbarians whose minds are still in their infancy and need guidance. Although not all the criticisms that have been raised against the younger Mill in the last few decades are equally valid (see Varouxakis 2013, pp. 101–44), there is no gainsaying that he did not develop a fully convincing answer to the problems posed by ruling backward societies and raising them to independence. (Perhaps his 35-year-long employment in the East India Company had much to do with the strengths and weaknesses of his approach to the non-European world and India in particular.) While J. S. Mill may have had a remarkably self-conscious aspiration to cultural open-mindedness (and while he may have displayed a considerable degree of such open-mindedness and aversion to ethnocentrism as far as other European societies were concerned), he showed himself relatively uninterested in cultural diversity in the non-European world and in non-European cultures.

The best-known liberal political thinker to defend imperialism and to recommend it for France to pursue was Tocqueville. Tocqueville was anxious to preserve political engagement and interest in public concerns in France in the face of what he saw as the growing atomization and

individualism of his compatriots—and of people living in what he referred to as the “democratic state of society” more generally. It was as a way of combating such dangers that Tocqueville approved of the exercise of French power in Algeria and elsewhere, although he was fully conscious and explicit that such rule was not in the interest of the dominated. Thus, Tocqueville is liable to the charge that he essentially sacrificed the interests of the colonized peoples to the paramount (for him) need to offer the French people a great object of ambition for the exercise of national pride and *grandeur* and the undertaking of a grand national unifying project (see Pitts 2005, pp. 204–39).

Empire and the problems it posed for political thought did not refer only to whether and how to rule alien “backward” peoples though. Another major aspect of political thought on empire was reflection and debate on what to do with the settler colonies. Shortly after the first Gladstone government came to power in 1868, there were widespread rumors that the government, under radical influence, would abandon the settler colonies (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa). Radical criticisms of the costliness and uselessness of the settler colonies, already vociferous with Richard Cobden and John Bright and most influentially articulated again in 1862–63 by the historian Goldwin Smith, were seen as having won over the Liberal government. A movement as widespread and ambitious as it was vague and diverse emerged by the late 1860s and became more vociferous as of 1870 and until the beginning of the twentieth century, calling for “imperial federation.” There were rich and animated debates over the question of the potential union of the United Kingdom with its “settler colonies” during the last three decades of the nineteenth century (Bell 2007). This new global polity, “like a world-Venice, with the sea for streets” (as J. R. Seeley memorably put it in *The Expansion of England* 1883, p. 283), was to guarantee both British strength and a just and stable world (the two went together in the eyes of its proponents).

The popularity of the idea of imperial federation in its various versions would not have been possible without the concurrence of two different kinds of development. The first was the increasingly strong anxiety about the future of Britain both as a world power on the international stage and internally, as democracy and its concomitants were seen unfolding. But

these anxieties would not have been sufficient were it not for the cognitive shift that was made possible by the communications technologies that facilitated increasing levels of economic interdependence. After around 1870, earlier misgivings about the possibility of a transcontinental state became increasingly less convincing, as a result of technological advances such as transoceanic steamships and the electric telegraph, which enabled an imaginative revolution that made the world look smaller and distant continents feel closer. The imperial federalists were conspicuously unclear about the details of the workings of the global state they envisaged (see Bell 2007).

The emphasis of most of the recent literature on different kinds of supporters of empire in the nineteenth century should not obscure the fact that there were some consistent and vociferous critics of empire in the nineteenth century, not least in Britain (Claeys 2010; Matikkala 2011). By far the most interesting group of British critics of empire and imperialism were the British followers of Auguste Comte, the devotees of the “religion of humanity.” Richard Congreve, Frederic Harrison, Edward Spencer Beesly, and John Henry Bridges were the leading British Comtists. It was part of the vision of global order envisaged by the French philosopher and founder of sociology that empires of conquest should be dissolved and large states should be broken down into smaller republics. The attitude of the Comtists toward empire and imperialism has recently been most fruitfully studied by Gregory Claeys. Claeys (2010) deals with great sensitivity and in unprecedented depth and detail with the pioneering and remarkable contributions to antiimperialist thinking produced by the British Comtists. It is not just that Comte’s British followers were the first to come up with the economic explanations of imperialism usually associated with J. A. Hobson. It is also that the Comtists came up with an astonishingly vociferous, sustained, and sometimes influential campaign against empires of conquest, starting as early as the mid-1850s and continuing until the 1920s. Claeys very correctly emphasizes the importance of the positivist “religion of humanity” and its crucial role in determining their anti-imperialist stance. It was the fact that the positivists believed in the unity of the human race and considered all peoples of the world “our brothers and fellow-citizens of the world—children of the same great kith and kin,” as Frederic Harrison put it (Harrison 1908, p. 247), that led them to attack

empires of conquest as vociferously as they did. It was, at the same time, the ridiculous aspects of the rituals imposed on that religion by its founder that led to them being derided by many contemporaries and later underestimated by condescending historians. But while their “religion” and “church of humanity” never managed to convert great numbers of Britons, their political message regarding imperialism was much better received among parts of the intellectual elites of Victorian and Edwardian Britain.

The positivist critique of empire influenced the much better-known arguments on imperialism articulated by J. A. Hobson in *Imperialism* (1902), which would in turn help to inspire the most famous Marxian critique of empire of the epoch, V. I. Lenin’s *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1917). Much of the critique of empire in the twentieth century occurred in terms of Marxist analyses. Hobson had given priority to explaining later modern imperial expansion in terms of the need to export surplus capital amid declining rates of domestic profit and the desire to expand markets, and the effective power of finance capital in persuading national governments to send troops to help secure such aims. Vladimir Lenin, Joseph Stalin, Mao Zedong, Ho Chi Minh, Fidel Castro, and other socialist leaders embellished these themes throughout most of the century. By the mid-twentieth century, many such writers also alleged that the removal of traditional imperial methods of rule did not prevent a neocolonial relationship, often based upon debt, from developing or being maintained, leaving former colonies notionally free of their masters but in fact as much exploited economically as ever. A further debate that emerged respected the desirability of the violent overthrow of colonial regimes, with the Algerian psychiatrist Frantz Fanon asserting that violence could help liberate colonised peoples from the inferiority complex imposed upon non-white races, while Mohandas Gandhi famously espoused non-violent methods to eject imperial oppressors. The search for raw materials doubtless played a major role in the expansion of both National Socialist Germany and imperial Japan in the 1930s and 1940s. The breakup of many of the great nineteenth-century empires by 2000, including part of the former Russian empire inherited by the Soviet Union, brought into play powerful new nationalist forces and rivalries. A persistent, indeed growing, search for raw materials, and especially oil and gas, by the more developed countries also brought renewed interest in securing sources of supply in the

Middle East in particular in the late twentieth century. A variety of debates arose from these factors respecting the validity and/or desirability of “liberal” interventionism to prevent ethnic conflicts in newly emerging nations, and to secure “regime change” where recalcitrant rulers failed to march to the tune of superpower bandmasters. In the early twenty-first century, few empires of the traditional type remain, and international order is maintained in part not only by global superpowers such as the United States and China, but also by the United Nations, a moderately more effective body than its predecessor, the League of Nations. Substantial tensions remain resulting from population growth, shortages of resources, global climate change, ethnic and national rivalries, uneven development, and economic deprivation. Imperialism itself, however, is widely regarded as a morally bankrupt concept. But if the “age of empires” has passed, the legacy of imperialism remains powerfully present in many parts of the globe.

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See also [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Ethnicity and Political Thought](#); [Fanon, Franz](#); [Gandhi, Mohandas \(Mahatma\)](#); [Hobson, John Atkinson](#); [Humanitarian Intervention](#); [International Law](#); [International Relations Theory and Political Thought](#); [Lenin and Leninism](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Mill, James](#); [Mill, John Stuart](#); [Nationalism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Revolution](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [United Nations](#), [Theories of the](#)

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Engels, Friedrich

Friedrich Engels (1820–95) grew up in the manufacturing town of Barmen, now a part of Wuppertal, in Germany, where his father owned a factory manufacturing lace and ribbon. The eldest child of eight children in a strongly Christian family, he was a gifted child for whom his parents had high expectations. It was thus a great disappointment to them when he turned to both atheism and communism. The parental unease was caused not just by shame, but also by the illiberal Prussian political framework that made all dissent distinctly dangerous. So after a year employed as a clerk for his father's firm, Friedrich was sent to work for his father's export agent in the north German port of Bremen. His parents thought that he would be better off away from undesirable influences including his radical school friends, although in fact he was more radical than they. Lodgings were arranged with a pietist clergyman, but Engels still enjoyed the freedoms of a large urban center where he had access to political pamphlets forbidden in his home area. From Bremen, he wrote to a friend that he was becoming a Hegelian. Berlin remained the center of radical Hegelianism, and it was there that Engels chose to do his military service. Something of this stayed with him, for he cultivated a military image (and always looked smart in contrast to the more bohemian Marx) and in 1849 used his training to support revolutionary forces in Elberfeld and in Baden. He also wrote numerous articles on military affairs and became known in the Marx family as the General. To his father, the army in Berlin must have seemed a bastion

of traditional morality, but Engels used his free time to pursue his philosophical interests.

Engels's link with the Young Hegelians brought him into contact with Karl Marx, who had studied at Berlin and had left just a few months before Engels arrived. Marx had become editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung* in October 1842. When the two met in Cologne a month later, Marx associated Engels with the radical Young Hegelians in Berlin from whom Marx now wished to dissociate himself. The first meeting, then, was not auspicious; however, a year later, Marx read Engels's "Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy" and was greatly impressed. For Marx, Engels had provided just what the Young Hegelians most lacked—an understanding of political economy from a philosophical perspective. He could also write well and incisively and had a knowledge of social conditions in England. He next met Marx in Paris in the summer of 1844 when returning to Germany after nearly two years in England. This time, his reception was much warmer, and so their collaboration began. Together they produced the foundation texts of what became known as Marxism, a label that implicitly designates Engels as the junior partner. However, his contribution was substantial. Engels became Marx's closest friend and intellectual collaborator. It was Engels who first directed Marx to the study of economics, who first acquainted him with factory conditions in industrial England, who advocated and popularized their shared beliefs, and who was Marx's major source of financial support during thirty-four years as a refugee in London. For more than half of these years, Engels continued his work in the Manchester branch of the family firm, leading a strange dual existence as businessman and revolutionary. He was outwardly the very picture of respectability, for he attended the concerts of the Hallé orchestra, rode with the Cheshire Hunt, and became Chairman of the prestigious Schiller Institute. Simultaneously, however, he corresponded regularly with Marx in pursuit of their revolutionary aims, and away from the city center maintained a second home where he lived with Mary Burns, a working-class Irish woman. She died in 1863, and Engels was happy to be able to retire in 1869 at the age of forty-nine. A year later, he joined Marx in London where he lived until his death in 1895.

Early Writings: Economics and Revolution

One way of understanding Marxism is as an economics-based explanation of history. It was Engels's 1844 article on "Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy" that led Marx to focus on the study of economics. Much that was to become familiar is already present here: the denunciation of the system of economic competition, the assertion that the gulf between capitalists and workers is antagonistic and bound to deepen and that social polarization will occur, the tendency of competition toward economic monopoly, and the belief that regular trade crises are endemic in a system that will reach its destined end in a social revolution. There is also the scathing denunciation of Thomas Malthus that, like much else in this article, was later to find fuller expression two decades later in Marx's *Capital*.

From a treatise on economic theory, Engels turned to actual social investigation. His *The Condition of the Working Class in England* ([1845] 1968) is a pioneering work of social history and remains instructive and interesting. At the time, Great Britain appeared to most people as monarchical and aristocratic. To Engels, this was a veneer hiding a rather different reality. For him, the dominant influence was the commercial middle class—what he called the bourgeoisie. In fact, thought Engels, the bourgeois class had been ruling in Britain since the so-called Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the industrial bourgeoisie since 1830. Engels described bourgeois class power as arrogant, overbearing, devoid of conscience, and blind to the consequences of its single-minded pursuit of wealth. It was the bourgeoisie who exploited the working classes. For evidence, Engels cited the 1834 Poor Law, framed, he believed, in accord with Malthus's law of population and constituting an open declaration of war against the workers.

Engels had been converted to communism by Moses Hess, who, in *The European Triarchy* (1841), had argued that European progress required that German philosophy combine with French political experience and the practical sense of the English. Hess, then, put these three nations together at the forefront of development. For Engels, however, who was moving toward an economic interpretation of history, Britain's level of industrialization put it at the forefront. Consequently, Britain was where the workers were most numerous, most oppressed, and most distinct; hence,

they were nearest to socialism. Engels then outlined a developmental scale according to which workers in the cities were more advanced than those in the countryside and those in industry more than those in handicraft or agriculture. Within industry, too, a gradation was evident. The factory hands were more enlightened than the miners, and the cotton industry was the most mechanized; consequently, its workers stood at the head of the labor movement and were the most hated by their employers. In this pattern of development, the most advanced workers confronted the most aggressive bourgeoisie. For Engels, the revolutionary culmination of this conflict was as inevitable and law-governed as any physical disease. The great French Revolution of 1789 demonstrated what was involved.

A few of the major writings of the 1840s have Marx and Engels listed as joint authors. In these cases, it is not easy to allocate prime responsibility. *The German Ideology* of 1846 (1972) was mostly penned by Engels even though some leading scholars have judged the contents to be more typical of Marx. It was, however, the product of joint discussions between them and can be regarded as the initial basic document of Marxism. Here, Engels and Marx asserted that the forms of morality and religion are not independent but are ideological, relating to people's socioeconomic situation and material interests, in the same way that German philosophy had to be understood as relating to German reality.

The 1848 (1983) *Manifesto of the Communist Party* was first published anonymously and then later under joint authorship, but the writing was done by Marx and shows some clear divergence from the views of Engels. For example, Engels's earlier view that England was at the forefront of revolutionary possibility is not confirmed. Rather, Germany is named as the country to which communist hopes are directed. This difference is clearly Marx's rejection of Engels's view, for in April 1848, Engels still maintained his optimism regarding England, offering his brother-in-law a bet that his Chartist friend George Julian Harney would be British foreign minister within two months. When those two months had elapsed, it was clear that Chartist agitation had not matched the scale of revolutionary events in France and Germany. Engels then adjusted to reality and relegated Britain to a much lower place on the revolutionary scale alongside Russia and Prussia.

After the failures of the 1848 to 1849 revolutions, Engels turned his mind to their German predecessor in *The Peasant War in Germany* ([1850] 1926) in the sixteenth century. Engels was particularly interested in Thomas Münzer, whose outlook, he thought, foreshadowed communism, but whose egalitarian policies were too advanced for the prevailing socioeconomic conditions. This study is the first example of Marxist history writing in that it is not primarily a story of great individuals, warriors, and kings, but of social groupings—princes, nobility, patriciate, clergy, peasants, serfs, and town plebeians. Furthermore, it relates the political aims of these separate groupings to their respective economic needs and interests.

For the next nineteen years, Engels worked in Manchester for Ermen and Engels, the family firm. During these years, he produced a large amount of journalism, some of it for the *New York Daily Tribune* and the *New York Times*, some of which was originally published under Marx's name. Engels was particularly interested in military affairs and wrote on both the Crimean War and the American Civil War. His articles for the *New America Cyclopaedia* (1857–58) included the entries on “Army,” “Cannon,” “Fortification,” “Infantry,” “Navy,” and “Armada.” Engels also continued his voluminous correspondence with Marx in London, whom he continued to subsidize, but produced no major writing. Such writings, then, fall conveniently into early and late periods.

Later Writings: Socialism and Science

When Engels moved back to London in 1870, political events also moved in his direction, most notably with the Paris Commune of 1871. In March of that year, following French military defeat by Prussia, the citizens of Paris set up their own revolutionary commune. It lasted only six weeks but inspired immense hope among socialists and great fear among their opponents. Engels described it as a dictatorship of the proletariat, the form of class rule that was necessary for the period of transition between capitalist and socialist systems, a viewpoint that had a strong influence on Lenin after the Russian Revolution of October 1917. However, the drama of the Paris Commune was brief. More durable was the rise of parliamentary socialism, particularly in Engels's homeland of Germany, where a socialist party was founded in 1863.

Marxism became known during the last quarter of the nineteenth century through its growing influence in European labor movements. During his lifetime, Marx had completed only Volume I of *Capital* (1867). Although not widely read, it became quite well known, partly due to the propaganda efforts of Engels, who wrote a number of reviews. *Capital* was taken to have demonstrated scientifically that the instabilities of capitalism rendered inevitable its revolutionary overthrow and replacement by communism. After Marx died in 1883, Volumes II (1885) and III (1894) of *Capital* were put together by Engels, virtually the only person who could read Marx's handwriting. However, the volumes were probably more honored than actually read.

The real basic textbook of European Marxism in the late nineteenth century was Engels's *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, one section of a longer work called *Anti-Dühring* ([1878] 1976). Here, Engels sought to distinguish his own views from some of the doctrines and sects with which Marxism was in competition. They were collectively labeled and denigrated as utopian socialism. The main writers of this tendency were taken to be Henri Saint-Simon, Charles Fourier, and the factory owner Robert Owen. Though heavily criticized, these writers were not without merit; far from it, for, said Engels, they had perceived the enormous gulf that divided liberal philosophy from the prevailing social realities. They had uncovered the hypocrisies behind existing society and so their insights aided the education of the working class. Saint-Simon, for example, had declared that the central problem of modern society was to improve the conditions of the poorest class. Such a formulation certainly appears in accord with Engels's own priorities, so why the epithet utopian and why the need to distance himself from them?

The answer lies in the idealism of their theory and the elitism of their politics. The utopian socialists allegedly shared with the Young Hegelians the inability to perceive the relationship of their philosophy to the development of society at large and so lacked an accurate account of its own development. For Engels, on the contrary, nothing major occurs by chance. Socialism has socioeconomic (and not merely intellectual) preconditions. Before socialism is meaningfully on the agenda, economic

development has to have generated capitalism, then industrialization, and then the modern urban working class.

Utopian socialism, then, was taken to be the limited ideology of what was merely the early, immature, and now superseded stage of the industrial proletariat's development. Consequently, the movement was not yet seen as self-determining with the workers as the agents of their own emancipation. According to the utopian socialists, the workers needed a great man to show them the way; the poor were to be led and then administered. For this reason, Engels judged their theory of social change to be not only merely false, but also paternalistic. Furthermore, the precise moment at which the great man of genius appears, the savior with the rational plan to transform society, seems completely arbitrary. He could, quipped Engels, equally well have appeared a few centuries earlier and so have saved humanity long ages of exploitation and suffering. Equally arbitrary, consequently, is the precise historical moment at which social justice can be implemented.

The utopian socialists, furthermore, were blamed for regarding their own conclusions as objective social truths. They imagined themselves as somehow standing apart from society and viewing it from an outer and overall perspective. As such, they regarded their theories as equally applicable to all sections of society, so they appealed to society at large rather than, as Engels thought they should, to the proletariat in particular. As with Thomas Paine at the end of the eighteenth century, the strength of reason was presumed capable of removing all obstacles in its path. For the utopian socialists, a true science of society required only reason for its formulation and administration for its implementation. In Engels's view, they thought that society would yield to their personal initiatives. Politics was virtually excluded, revolution definitely so. The utopian socialists assumed that the example of their small-scale experiments would make the required impression on the rest of the world. This echo of eighteenth-century radicalism was derided by Engels as both unrealistic and conservative: unrealistic, as the beneficiaries of a particular social order would not peacefully submit to its planned abolition, and conservative, in that a politics of consensus merely causes stagnation in a society torn apart by deep class divisions.

The whole point of Engels's analysis was to argue that utopian socialism had been superseded. This was an age in which the concept of science had great prestige; hence, social science, Christian science, and from Marx and Engels, the claim to provide scientific socialism. What was it, then, that could make socialism scientific? One part, for Engels, was the heritage of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. His dialectical method not only saw all the elements of society as interlinked, but also perceived the antagonisms between the various sections that led to the next stage of social progress. The other part was materialism, the understanding of the real base from which development arises. This, thought Engels, was class struggle rooted in the current mode of economic production. It was the economic structure that provided the base from which arises a congruent superstructure of law, politics, and ideas. Engels concluded the work with a brief overview of social development, the point of which was to demonstrate that capitalism was now anachronistic and that it was the task of the proletariat to overthrow it and bring the means of production into common ownership.

Largely through *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, Marxism got into the European labor movement in the form that Engels gave it. His writings were both less complex and easier to read than those of Marx and were, therefore, accessible to a wider readership. Engels's neat packaging of history facilitated the transformation of theory into ideology. A significant instance of this is found in his writings on the state. One of the best-known parts of the Marxist doctrine is its theory of the state. This is taken to be the view that in each social formation the actual state structure is the instrument of its ruling class. Consequently, under ancient slavery, the state was in the hands of the slave owners who used it to hold down the slaves, under feudalism it was the instrument of the landed aristocracy who used it to dominate the peasant serfs and bondsmen, and under capitalism it is used by the bourgeois class to oppress the proletariat. This orthodox Marxist view was actually never explicitly stated by Marx himself; he noted that the capitalist state was usually a class instrument, but he did not generalize over all previous modes of production. So what has been taken to be the orthodox view of the state was first clearly and fully documented by Engels in 1884. It is not merely that Marx did not formulate it; the writing was not even seen by Marx, who had died a year earlier.

Engels lived twelve years after Marx's death and so was a fuller witness to the growth of parliamentary socialism, especially in his native Germany. The dominant view of Marxism is that it is a doctrine of revolution. In the main texts, confirmation of this view is not hard to find, and it is unsurprising given that political Marxism is predominantly a product of the 1840s. At that time, workers had not been granted full citizenship status; they did not have the parliamentary vote, and their trades unions, if legal, were barely tolerated. Riots or revolution seemed to many the only way in which their grievances could be made known. This, however, is not the whole picture. In the 1840s, Engels had quite explicitly aligned himself with the British Chartist movement, whose aim was not bloody revolution but parliamentary representation. Implicit in Engels's writings is that both paths could lead to the same destination. The working-class vote could be revolutionary if it were used to upset the whole previous constitutional structure. In the 1870s, when the German Social Democrats were gaining seats in the German parliament, Engels and Marx were often critical of their precise tactics, but never of their parliamentary orientation as such. It seems that they were much less dogmatic than many of their followers and were happy for the workers to take whatever opportunities for advancement were available. However, in Engels's last decade, a definite shift of emphasis occurs, for now revolution seems dangerously counterproductive, likely merely to result in suppression, whereas legality is bringing socialism ever nearer.

Engels's interest in the natural sciences is evident in his *Dialectics of Nature* (written 1875–76; published 1925). Part of his concern was to combat the people we now call creationists. There is more than a hint of German nationalism in his view that Charles Darwin completed the intellectual revolution actually begun by Kaspar Wolff of Berlin in 1759. Engels also asserted that just as mankind has a history of development, so too does all of nature and even the solar system. The development from birth to death is universal. There is a powerful paragraph in which he envisaged a time when the earth will become too cold for all organic life and then disappear, rather a remarkable shift from the normal communist optimism about the future.

In *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* ([1884] 2010), Engels drew on recently published anthropology for an account of mankind's early development, especially in respect of family structures. He related family type to its appropriate stage of human development. Thus, savagery had group marriage, barbarism had pairing marriage, and civilization had monogamy. The change from matrilineal to patrilineal families eventually led to patriarchy and the monogamous family. Engels saw this as a victory for private ownership over original common ownership. It signified the subjection of women to men, the first form of class oppression. Engels then turned to the North American tribe, particularly the Iroquois, where everything allegedly ran smoothly in spite of there being no state structure, no slavery, and no sexual inequality. Engels clearly found this rather appealing, but concedes that society was economically very undeveloped. It was destroyed by the base motives of greed, selfishness, and avarice that ushered in class society.

For the next stage, Engels turned to ancient Greece and Rome, then to the Celts and Germans, outlining how ever greater variations of wealth led to the need for the state as an institution that protected the propertied from the unpropertied. He then considered the feudal and bourgeois states before reaching his main analytical point: a reminder that the state has not always existed. It arose at the point in history when class differentials needed to be maintained. This need provided the guide to its eventual disappearance, for when, under communism, class ceases to exist, the state will become unnecessary, relegated to what he called the Museum of Antiquities. Engels provided just one brief mention of this future condition in pointing out that under communism the family would cease to be the basic economic unit of society. The care and education of children would be taken over by society as a whole, although precisely how this would operate is not explained. A consequence, however, would be that a marriage form liberated from economic considerations would be based solely on mutual love, so it would be genuine and free for the first time in modern society.

Engels's last major writing was *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy* ([1888] 2001). It provides an account of his and Marx's relationship to, and emancipation from, Hegelianism. Here, he asserted that the same laws applied to both human history and to the natural sciences, but

he made the obvious point that people are distinguished from the rest of nature by pursuing their goals consciously. This distinction makes it appear as if historical events are governed by chance, but, says Engels, there are hidden laws also determining social development. These laws he claims, with Marx, to have uncovered. Their essence is that class struggle based on economic interests is the moving force of human history. His account of the materialist view of history has a focus on religion and includes the assertion that Catholicism is the natural ideology of feudalism and Protestantism of bourgeois society.

Engels was clearly a remarkable autodidact who produced fluent commentaries that ranged over the sciences, philosophy, and all of human history. These writings are admirably well written, but those relating to science now find little approval. They are, however, not insignificant, for they have often been granted the doubtful accolade of underlying the scientific orthodoxies of the Soviet Union.

Michael Levin

See also [Communism](#), [Varieties of](#); [Dictatorship of the Proletariat](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Socialism](#); [Utopianism](#)

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Norbert Waszek Norbert Waszek

English Enlightenment

English enlightenment

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English Enlightenment

The very title of this entry might already arouse debate and contradiction. Conservative or neoconservative historians of ideas have long denied, sometimes explicitly, more often by silence, the existence of an English Enlightenment. But more striking than the politically motivated denial is the neglect of the subject in scholarship. In his influential book *The Creation of the Modern World: The Untold Story of the British Enlightenment*, the late Roy Porter (1946–2002) opened his own exploration of the field with a motto he found in J. G. A. Pocock’s “Clergy and Commerce: The Conservative Enlightenment in England” that underlines that the historiography of the English Enlightenment has long remained a neglected field, even a “black hole” (Porter 2001, xvii; cf. Pocock 1985, 528). He also refers to the fact that very few books (or even none before his own) have used the terms English Enlightenment or Enlightenment in England in their titles (ibid., 5; an exception is J. Redwood 1976). While he did much to fill the gap with his book, Porter is certainly right with his diagnosis that the Enlightenment in England has received much less scholarly attention than its German (*Aufklärung*) and French (*Lumières*) counterparts, or even England’s northern neighbor, with the Scottish Enlightenment now a well-established field. A prominent example to illustrate that state of scholarship is Ernst Cassirer’s (1874–1945) otherwise magisterial, though now dated, study, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment* ([1932] 1951), which treats Lord Shaftesbury in some detail. Shaftesbury had long been favored in German scholarship (Weiser 1916) and mentions John Locke, John Toland,

and Matthew Tindal here and there (though not often), but he leaves out many other authors who might be considered eminent representatives of the Enlightenment in England. The fault is not so much Cassirer's personal stand; it reflects an approach to the Enlightenment that concentrated on those who were then considered the leading philosophers of the period, at the expense of the vectors and impact of the movement, of the interaction between the ideas and their social, political, and other contexts.

While the neglect of scholarly attention to the Enlightenment in England cannot be doubted, it remains somewhat puzzling, for the Continental perception of the phenomenon at the time was strong. The liberty of expression, enhanced by the progress of printing techniques; the admirable advances in the sciences, from Francis Bacon and Isaac Newton onward; the improvements of living conditions; religious toleration with its corresponding abhorrence for fanaticism; and last but not least, the whole sphere of political institutions and culture in England—all these achievements were celebrated by the foremost representatives of the Continental philosophes, by the different versions of enlightened Europe: the *Aufklärer* in the Protestant territories of what was to become Germany, *les Lumières* in France, *gli illuministi* in Cesare Beccaria's Lombardy, and so on. Was Newton, for example, not almost deified by Francois-Marie Arouet Voltaire, an object of admiration and a source of inspiration for Immanuel Kant, and popularized “for ladies” by Francesco Algarotti (1712–64)?

Where to begin? Seen from a Continental perspective, the middle of the eighteenth century seems indeed the high time of the Enlightenment. Most of the leading lights of the movement published their major works from the 1750s to the 1780s. This relatively short time span covers most of Denis Diderot's and Jean-Jacques Rousseau's texts, Beccaria's *On Crimes and Punishments* (1764), much of David Hume's and all of Adam Smith's works, and most of Moses Mendelssohn's and Gotthold Lessing's texts, with Montesquieu's *De l'esprit des loix* appearing just before (1748), Voltaire publishing some of his works a little earlier, and some of Immanuel Kant's texts a little later. Of course, there have always been forerunners or pioneers—the latter is probably a better term, for it does not imply exclusion from the movement. Thus, Porter's criticism of Robert Darnton's

expression of the pre-Enlightenment seems justified (Porter 2001, xvii, 485), but since early Enlightenment has been much used to qualify figures such as Christian Thomasius (1655–1728) on the Continent, why not use the same device for England. There seems at any rate no reason to sever Locke and the Third Earl of Shaftesbury from the Enlightenment, just because the former died as early as 1704 and the latter in 1713.

Obviously, space constraints do not allow a full presentation of, for example, Locke's political philosophy, although there is no shortage of good commentaries on it (cf. the numerous publications of John W. Yolton and John Dunn)—and it would hardly be satisfying to provide a list of relevant English authors from Locke onwards to James Mill at the far end, with a few sentences of philosophical exegeses on each figure. To cover all the subject matter evoked in the second paragraph would take a rather large book and thus cannot be an option either. What will be attempted then, in what follows, is a branch line in the understanding of the Enlightenment in England; however, it is an important one, especially when one looks at it from the angle of the uptake of English thinking overseas—an aspect that Porter neglects, as he admits himself, in spite of his awareness that “insular history has no virtues” (Porter 2001, xx). Though it is not easy to give a single name to this branch line, it encompasses rational religion, deism, the advancement of religious toleration, and the corresponding battle against bigotry, fanaticism, persecution, and religiously motivated civil war; thus, it also deals with religion and politics and, in general, with the rise of a lay and secular society in England. Of course, in spite of the largeness of this field, it does not cover all the Enlightenment, *tant pis*, no less a witness than Hume would not have shrugged at the suggestion that the Enlightenment was primarily the emancipation from religious prejudices and judging on the basis of Peter Gay's two-volume tour *de force*, we would touch more than half of it at any rate. But there are at least two more serious reasons for the option taken. First, this branch line certainly leads to what is central and to some extent specific to the Enlightenment in England—that the widespread acceptance of new mental attitudes and values was more important than the achievements of profound philosophies such as the one exposed by Kant. Since this went against Cassirer's inmost convictions, he could never be in a position to appreciate what England contributed to the Enlightenment. J. C. D. Clark might have been closer to the truth when he

wrote that Locke's ideas on religion had a greater impact on eighteenth-century England than his "import of contractarianism into politics" (Clark 1985, 47). The second argument stems again from a continental perspective: the chosen branch line reveals the impact of Deist ideas and religious critiques from England on such important German figures as H. Samuel Reimarus and Lessing, on Pietro Giannone and others in Italy, and even on the philosophes themselves, against the dated vision of Paris as the epicenter of the Enlightenment, were much stimulated by them (cf. Torrey 1930 and Venturi 1971).

Locke shared a number of convictions with Pierre Bayle. It cannot be excluded that they met when Locke was living in exile in Holland, and Locke might well have taken over some of Bayle's views on toleration, but he was, as Martin Fitzpatrick (2000, 38) wrote, "[t]he more systematic thinker," and more importantly, he had a greater impact on his compatriots. Indeed, Locke became undoubtedly the champion of toleration in England, and he laid the basis for the deep transformation that took place in the eighteenth century with the result that, toward the end of it, an English gentleman could without contest be religious on his own terms, a phrase that meant nothing less than that belief had become "a matter of private judgement" (cf. Porter 2001, 98).

Specialist scholarship may well distinguish between Locke's views on toleration before and after the middle of the 1660s, with the later period marked by his writing around 1767, the posthumously published "An Essay Concerning Toleration" opening up his lasting stand on the question—though the broad, contemporary, and later reception of his views has often ignored such subtleties. The modifications toward his mature position took place in the context of Locke's reflections on economic matters and the related questions of private law. Though he does not discuss in any detail how toleration would contribute to increase the prosperity of the kingdom, his programmatic formulations do not leave any doubt that it will do so. Still later in life, when in exile, his personal experience of Dutch conditions must have reinforced that opinion. Stripped to their bare essentials, and at the risk of oversimplifying the issue, Locke's arguments in favor of toleration stem from the principle that the state's action is limited to securing the life, the goods, and the freedom of the citizens. By securing

these, the state will bring peace to society. Even the actions of the citizens that do not enter into conflict with the fundamental tasks of the state are beyond the legitimate intervention of the sovereign; even more so, their convictions or their conscience cannot be coerced anyway. Locke's conception should not be underestimated, for it was beneficial and brought a number of arguments already in use into a coherent and efficient line of reasoning and strategy. But it should not be overestimated either, for his pleading in favor of toleration remained limited to some Protestant dissenters—in this respect, a theoretical recognition of the status quo, for many Protestant sects already flourished in England—while excluding Catholics, Jews, other non-Christians, and of course atheists who might endanger the order of established government (cf. Champion 2000, 134 ff).

In his *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, Locke argues not only against the Calvinists, but also against certain Deists (though he does not call either of them by these names). However, it is legitimate to begin the treatment of the incisive latter current with him, for he upheld the fundamental point not only that religion, properly understood, must be rational, but that reason and revelation are in harmony—and has thus often been included in histories of Deism (cf. Lechler's [1841] 1965 pioneer study, influential even in England). But when Toland created a wide polemic and even scandal with his *Christianity Not Mystrious* ([1696] 1995), his text was perceived by the contemporaries as pursuing (perhaps exaggerating) Locke's reasoning.

To speak of Deism as a current or a philosophical movement is tricky and somewhat misleading, for the term, initially often used pejoratively by people hostile to it, covers in reality a wide spectrum of positions: Deists indeed came, as Porter puts it (2001, 112) "in many colours." This variety or even disparity of the Deists provides a welcome opportunity to underline that the English Enlightenment in general, unlike its Continental counterparts, was not a network, but rather a construction after the face of what was, in reality, a diversity of "intellectual enclaves, dispersed over England" (Thompson 1978, 58). Not every Deist denied the existence or the idea of revelation, but most considered that natural religion, which might also be characterized as a religion of reason, is sufficient (a conviction making revelation almost redundant). Some Deists might add a belief in certain attributes of God and in some fundamental articles of faith, without

necessarily agreeing on a common catalogue of such attributes and articles. Without going into details of individual expressions of their respective convictions, we can say that the Deists (without speaking of Edward Herbert) from Locke and Toland were chiefly represented by Anthony Collins, Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury, Samuel Clarke, Thomas Woolston, and Matthew Tindal, without forgetting John Leland's important retrospective of 1754–55, *A View of the Principal Deistical Writers That Have Appeared in England in the Last and Present Century*. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, in 1787, Mary Wollstonecraft summed up the growing popularity of such views saying that it has become "the fashion" among young men to be Deists. And even Robert Owen's much more radical stand on religion may have benefited, in its reception, from the Deists' critique of the various positive, revealed religions.

But more important are the facts that Deism was perceived on the European continent as the distinctly English contribution to the Enlightenment and that Deism enjoyed a wide and strong reception there. Lessing's views on religion and toleration, vital for future developments, as expressed in his late theoretical writings and popularized in his play *Nathan the Wise*, would be unthinkable without his study of the Deists.

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See also [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [French Enlightenment](#); [German Enlightenment](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Locke, John](#); [Radicalism](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Scottish Enlightenment](#)

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Environmentalism, Ecology, and Political Thought

Environmentalism, ecology, and political thought

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Environmentalism, Ecology, and Political Thought

While the term *ecology* was coined by the German biologist Ernst Haeckel in his book *Generelle Morphologie der Organismen* in 1866 to refer to the economy of nature and the interactions between organisms and their environment, traditions of thought with similarities to modern environmentalism can be traced back to classical antiquity. Victor Davis Hanson (1995) has argued that a distinctive agrarianism not only underpinned the socioeconomic development of the ancient Greek polis where Western philosophy was born, but also had considerable normative force there, stressing the moral superiority of the yeoman farmer over the urban commercialist; patience, practicality, communality, and frugality were citizen virtues directly emergent from self-reliant rural life and were in turn validated by such figures as Plato, Aristotle, Xenophon, and Aristophanes. Indeed, it is etymologically accepted that the terms *ecology* and *economics* both derive from the root *oikos* (household), and on Hanson's account (1995), the paradigmatic ancient Greek *oikos* was the private farm. Classical Greece also gave birth to other significant components of a modern environmentalist perspective, such as revulsion at human hubris and the origins of philosophical naturalism. Max Oelschlaeger (1991) argues that Heraclitus was the first thinker to interweave physics and ethics, while Andrew Belsey (1994) has observed that the pre-Socratic idea of *kosmos* incorporated ideas of order, morality, harmony, and beauty as being immanent in the natural world and unfolding in organic spontaneous

development, thus demonstrating Greek roots to naturalist ethics. Similarly, Laura Westra and Thomas Robinson (1997) note that both Pythagoras and Empedocles recognized human kinship to animals, with the former's followers practicing vegetarianism. On the negative side, the Greek philosophical heritage has been criticized by environmentalists for its dualist, anthropocentric tendencies and suspicion of change in perceptible nature; see, for example, Eugene Hargrove (1987) and J. Baird Callicott (1989). However, at least some forms of anthropocentrism can include environmental concern. The emphasis on moral character in Stoicism, for instance, is allied to a belief that the dynamics of nature and fortune cannot be humanly controlled so that wisdom dictates rejecting hubris and cultivating forms of self-reliant happiness that harmonize with the dynamics of natural reason, a perspective that could also incorporate respect for environmental conditions and support for agrarian over urban life; see Allan Holland (1997) and Clarence Glacken (1967). There is nonetheless an important difference between any of these ancient philosophical traditions and modern green thought's core ideals. For while all of these traditions make reference to nature and some can be seen to have modern echoes, such as in Thomas Jefferson's belief in agrarian virtuous self-reliance, none are based on the value of nonhuman nature per se as is the case with contemporary green politics. For the first proto-green invocations of nonhuman nature's value, one must look to the Romantics in Europe and the Transcendentalists in America.

Romanticism, Early Green Thought, Modernity, and Ecology

Though Jean-Jacques Rousseau never advances an explicit account of value in nonhuman nature, his stress on the simple harmlessness of natural man, especially in his *Discourse of the Origins of Inequality*, functioned as a vital touchstone that inspired several themes in Romanticism, most notably the invocation of nature as being a test of truth, a twin to moral authenticity, and a counterpoint to both arbitrary power and the stifling artificiality of excessive convention. Moreover, as Harold Bloom and Lionel Trilling (1973) have discussed, the Romantic emphasis on the depth and development of the human self as it is conditioned respectively by nature

and society helped usher in a new orientation to the natural world, perhaps most notably evoked in William Wordsworth's poetry, in which a dialectical relationship exists between sensitive receptivity to nature and the development of self-knowledge and imagination. To the reader, the greatest lesson of Wordsworth's nature poetry is how to feel, a point to which we shall return, but the stress found in his work, and in that of some fellow Romantics (e.g., Samuel Taylor Coleridge and John Clare in England; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Novalis [the pseudonym of Georg Philipp Friedrich Freiherr von Hardenberg] in Germany) on the importance of nature experience for human self-development can be loosely seen as the historic starting point of claims for nature's noneconomic or intrinsic value in human life. At the same time, the generally hostile Romantic reaction to Newtonian mechanism and to the Industrial Revolution significantly prefigured contemporary green social criticisms. A further influence from Romanticism played out in the United States of America, where the Transcendentalism of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau further developed the notion that piety and receptiveness toward nature is vital to human development. In particular, Thoreau's *Walden* ([1854] 2004), drawn from his experiment in simple living at Walden Pond, combined inspiration from a life lived in nature with a practical demonstration of frugal living and independence while Emerson's influence helped inspire John Muir (1838–1914), the first president of the Sierra Club and a successful campaigner for the establishment of America's national parks system. Muir's writings built upon the transcendentalist notion that nature was to be revered as God's handiwork to further suggest a nonanthropocentric moral perspective in which all life possessed value and human privilege was reduced or abolished, though the extent to which Muir developed this as a distinct philosophy is contested; see Thurman Wilkins (1995) and Bruce Pencek (2000). Undeniably, however, Muir's thought influenced later attempts to found a nonanthropocentric ethics.

While the Romantic green heritage combined individualism with a generally optimistic emphasis on human development, another important input into environmental thought originated from a pessimistic conservative perspective. The English clergyman Thomas Malthus, fiercely opposing doctrines of human improvement emanating from the French Revolution, developed a theory of population dynamics intended to demonstrate that

human society irrevocably followed cyclical patterns of growth and rapid decline in relation to resource scarcity, thus making arguments for lasting social improvement flawed. His work *An Essay on the Principle of Population* ([1798] 2008), which went through six editions between 1798 and 1826, argued that unchecked population increases geometrically (e.g., 1, 2, 4, 8) whereas food supply increases only arithmetically (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4), so there is a continuous tendency for demand to outstrip the supply of necessities when population rises, as well as a permanent likelihood of poverty and starvation for some section of the populace. The focus on population rather than on wealth and consumption, along with Malthus's opposition to artificial methods of contraception and his supporters' tendency to advocate (sometimes compulsory) birth control only for the poorer classes, led to sharp criticism from the far left, notably in Friedrich Engels's *Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy* ([1844] 1973), thus prefiguring contemporary debates about the respective roles of population and consumption in relation to sustainability. However, liberal reformist thinkers of the utilitarian school also accepted some of Malthus's ideas in a more optimistic spirit. Thus, John Stuart Mill (1806–73) accepted the basic Malthusian idea of a tension between a sprinting population and a crawling resource base but supported the use of contraception among working people to reduce the spare labor pool and thus increase wages and opportunities for social improvement. Moreover, whereas Malthus emphasized population, Mill tacitly recognized both the role of consumption and wealth differentials, arguing in the *Principles of Political Economy* ([1848] 1994) that a future “stationary state” of zero economic growth was both inevitable and compatible with progress; indeed, he anticipated that after a period of general intellectual improvement, a more egalitarian distribution of wealth and a reduction in economic competition would lead to significant human moral and emotional improvement. Mill was, thus, the first political thinker to advocate a sustainable “steady state” economy of the type supported by contemporary green thinkers, and still more strikingly, he argued for it partly on Romantic grounds, namely the effect of immersion in nature on human character. In this belief, he was partly influenced by his own past experience, for Mill famously suffered a breakdown in 1826 to 1827 in which he was unable to feel pleasure in life; he recovered from this crisis partly with the help of Wordsworth's nature poetry, which evoked his love of nature and “seemed to be the very culture of the feelings I was in quest

of” (Mill [1873] 1964, 116). The lesson Mill drew from this expresses itself in his claim that economic growth should become stationary while some of nature remained undeveloped, for there is not “much satisfaction in contemplating the world with nothing left to the spontaneous activity of nature” and “solitude in the presence of natural beauty and grandeur is the cradle of thoughts and aspirations which are not only good for the individual, but which society could ill do without” (Mill [1848] 1994, in “Of the Stationary State”). Mill was not alone as a nineteenth-century thinker in connecting human well-being to nature aesthetics and radical economic change, an early form of ecosocialism being developed by William Morris, who popularized his views in his 1890 utopian novel *News from Nowhere*.

On the scientific side, controversy surrounds any clear dating of the science of ecology’s birth, with some underlying principles such as the idea of the economy of nature traceable back to pre-Darwinian thinkers such as Carl Linnaeus while the beginnings of the modern ecological laws of species to area relationships can be attributed to the German biogeographer Alexander von Humboldt. Taking Ernst Haeckel’s 1866 coining of the term as a beginning however, the first widely read sourcebook on ecology was the American Frederic Clements’s *Research Methods in Ecology* (1905). Clements proposed that ecosystems undergo processes of successive development that are analogous to the growth of a single organism in which parts act to maintain the integrity of the whole—hence his view that plant ecosystems could be seen as superorganisms. Though Clements’s view was strongly challenged by Henry Gleason and other ecologists, the concept of the superorganism proved an enduring source of controversy. Moreover, Clements’s related notion of a *climax community*, an ecological system that has reached a steady state through processes of ecological succession and in which stability may be partly dependent on internal biodiversity, was a major influence on American green thought. Most significant here is Clements’s strong influence on the farmer, forester, and ecologist Aldo Leopold (1886–1948), whose posthumously published book *A Sand County Almanac* ([1949] 1989) invoked the concept of a land ethic to regulate human interaction with ecosystems, a notion foundational to much contemporary environmental ethics. Leopold’s much cited land ethic formulation that “a thing is right when it preserves the integrity, stability

and beauty of the biotic community” (Leopold [1949] 1989, 224–25) is indebted to Clements’s climax community concept by implicitly equating integrity and stability, along with the background assumption that a diversity of species is required to grant these values to an ecosystem.

Contemporary Green Political Thought

The spur most easily identified with the birth of the contemporary green movement was the 1962 publication of Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring*. Carson’s book, which carefully examined the dangerous cumulative effects of heavy use of pesticides upon ecosystems, took its title from the possibility of a future world in which no birds sang. It broke the spell of technological optimism that had dominated the postwar West and led to the banning of the insecticide DDT in the United States. It provided a rallying point for the nascent politics of ecology, contributed to the 1970 founding of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and inspired the later political development of both ecofeminism—the philosophy linking patriarchy as the root cause of female oppression and ecological destruction—and deep ecology. The steady rise of the environmental movement was also importantly fuelled by the Club of Rome’s publication *The Limits to Growth* (1972), which used computer modeling to demonstrate with five key variables—world population, industrialization, pollution, food production, and resource depletion—that exponential economic growth is incompatible with finite resources even if technological fixes for problems are found. The book significantly promoted the green view that new political values and action, not merely new technologies, are needed to avoid ecological meltdown.

This emphasis on the need for social transformation as distinct from reformist tinkering has been cast in several ways in the green politics literature. In 1973, Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess began the deep ecology movement with his article distinguishing “shallow” anthropocentric reformist approaches to environmental problems from the “deep” nonanthropocentric perspective that advocates biospheric egalitarianism in ethics, radical reduction in human consumption, production, and population impacts, and a political emphasis on quality of life. A similar but nonidentical distinction is made by Andrew Dobson (1990) in

distinguishing reformist or “light green” environmentalism from radical or “dark green” ecologism, with significant differences implied for political strategies since simple reforms may distract from the real magnitude of required change. Dobson also suggests that at least in its guise as ecologism, green politics may be seen as a new ideology transcending the customary left-right spectrum due to its ambivalent relationship to the Enlightenment tradition: on the one side, contemporary green politics tends leftward in terms of social egalitarianism, but on the other side, the common green skepticism toward large-scale transformations of nature and society represents a conservative orientation. A further important tension is between authoritarian and libertarian wings of ecological thought. Though policies of the late 1960s and early 1970s inspired by neo-Malthusianism tended toward authoritarian measures such as rationing and immigration controls, green parties have steadily moved in a left-liberal direction since with far stronger emphases on decentralist democracy, alternative technology, market-based instruments, and quality of life factors as tools for social change. In addition, one should note a long-standing anarchist strand in green thought, most notably manifest in Murray Bookchin’s social ecology, a theory that draws upon ecology, socialism, ecofeminism, and Peter Kropotkin’s anarchist theory to charge that social problems, primarily hierarchy and statism, are at the root of ecological crisis.

Though radical variants of ecosocialism, ecoanarchism, deep ecology, and ecofeminism remain strong in the green movement, a tendency to more reformist means has been increasingly ascendant in green politics ever since the 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission) Report and since the 1992 Rio Earth Summit popularized the term *sustainable development*. The concept of sustainability that emerged is a highly contested one, with multiple competing definitions and a central division between sustaining a level of human welfare over a given time span (weak sustainability), as favored by many standard economic models, and a steady state economy based around the sustaining of particulars, such as natural capital (strong sustainability), as favored by most greens and perhaps anticipated by Mill. One manifestation of the new reformism is an increased interest in the compatibility of core green values with liberalism, and much important recent work, such as that by Marcel Wissenburg (1998), Dobson (2003), Simon Hailwood (2004), and Bryan

Norton (2005) has stressed options for capturing green goals within liberal democratic frameworks.

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See also [Conservatism](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Liberalism](#); [Malthus, Thomas Robert](#); [Mill, John Stuart](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Progress](#); [Romanticism](#); [Rousseau, Jean-Jacques](#); [Thoreau, Henry David](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Equality and Egalitarianism

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Equality and Egalitarianism

At least since the French Revolution (1789–99), the ideal of equality has played an important role in politics and political theory. Indeed, today, virtually everyone believes in some kind of equality, such as equality before the law, political equality (e.g., as captured in the slogan “one person, one vote”) or, more demanding, social equality. Furthermore, social movements working for the emancipation of oppressed groups have often framed their claims in egalitarian terms, for example, in terms of *equal rights* or *equality of opportunity* for workers, women, blacks, gays and lesbians, ethnic and religious minorities, the elderly, people with disabilities, and (even) nonhuman animals.

However, while virtually everyone believes in some kind of equality, not everyone is an egalitarian in the contemporary sense of the term. Thus, the terms *egalitarian* and *egalitarianism* tend to be used to refer to people or theorists who endorse not only judicial and political equalities of the kind mentioned above, but also some form of social equality, requiring, at a minimum, a (significant) redistribution of resources, including income. This requirement is why egalitarianism is mostly associated with the political left.

As a social ideal, equality is constitutive of justice in the sense that, according to egalitarians, equality is at least in part what justice, or distributive justice, consists in. However, equality is by no means a simple ideal, and political theorists have grappled with the concept and how best to

develop an egalitarian theory. Indeed, the concept of equality has been at the forefront of political philosophy ever since John Rawls published his pioneering work, *A Theory of Justice*, in 1971. In this book, Rawls developed a very influential form of *liberal egalitarianism*—that is, a theory that combines a concern for liberty and a concern for equality.

Equality of What?

Any theory of equality must answer the question of what individuals (or groups of individuals) should have equal shares of. Whatever should be possessed equally is sometimes referred to as the *currency* of egalitarian justice. Often in the social sciences, research on inequality focuses on income, and economists have developed sophisticated measures of monetary inequality, including the Gini coefficient, which is a measure of how much income would have to be redistributed to achieve a perfectly equal monetary distribution (although, in fact, this measure can be used on other currencies as well). Likewise, political philosophers, including Rawls, have traditionally tended to focus on monetary equality, or equality of purchasing power. A main attraction of this idea, it is thought, is that while it in some respects puts individuals on an equal footing, it can simultaneously be used to hold them responsible for their choices. If people have equal initial purchasing power, then even if some end up with more money than others because they work longer hours, for example, or invest their money where others spend their time and resources on leisure, this resulting difference in income is not unfair because it is the result of choices people have voluntarily made.

However, even if people have equal external resources, in the form of equal purchasing power, they may at the same time have unequal internal resources, and thus unequal opportunities to use their time and money productively. For example, people have different levels of health and talent, which means that even from an initially equal monetary platform, they have unequal opportunities—for example, to acquire further income. Therefore, some egalitarian theorists suggest that, to compensate individuals with lower levels of health and/or talent, these individuals should receive extra resources in the initial distribution thereof. We will then have a distribution that is not only endowment insensitive because people are compensated for

deficiencies in health and talent that have resulted from their genetic make-up and/or social background, but also choice sensitive because people are required to bear the consequences of their own choices. This egalitarian principle is sometimes referred to as *equality of resources*.

Proponents of equality of resources believe that this principle has the further advantage that, unlike equality of welfare, it does not render society vulnerable to people's expensive tastes. *Equality of welfare* is the view that welfare (or quality of life) is the currency of egalitarian justice. Against this principle it has been argued that if some people have preferences that are much more costly to satisfy than other people do, then to equalize welfare, we would have to secure much higher incomes for those with expensive tastes than for others. Equality of resources, on the other hand, is not vulnerable to this objection, as it requires equality of purchasing power only.

However, welfare egalitarians have answered that this objection confuses what are in fact two different distinctions. If we do not believe that society should sponsor people's expensive tastes, this is because we believe that people are themselves responsible for developing these tastes. But we need to separate the question of whether we should sometimes hold people responsible for their share of advantages and the question of whether the correct measure of advantages in an egalitarian theory is resources or welfare. The first question concerns whether we should focus on equality of outcome or equality of opportunity, whereas the second question concerns what it is that we want people to either have equal shares of, or alternatively equal opportunities to acquire. Thus, some egalitarians argue that what justice requires is equality of opportunity for welfare, according to which individuals should only be compensated for deficiencies in welfare insofar as they are not themselves responsible for being worse off than others. On this basis, it may be argued that people who are worse off because they have cultivated expensive tastes do not have legitimate claims for compensation.

Whether we focus on resources or welfare, ideals of equality of opportunity need to distinguish between deficiencies for which people are responsible and deficiencies for which they are not. One way of thinking about this

distinction is the following. Sometimes shares of advantages are results of sheer luck. This is so if, for example, these shares are determined by the physical constitution with which we are born or by features of our initial social environment. Since no one chooses his or her genes or the social circumstances of his or her family, we cannot be said to be responsible for these aspects of our lives or for the advantages or disadvantages that flow from them. However, while we cannot be said to be responsible for our circumstances, we can be said to be responsible for at least some of the choices we make and more specifically, for the manner in which we administer our circumstances. This is the main idea behind the view commonly referred to as *luck egalitarianism*.

Obviously, the choice of welfare or resources as the basis of egalitarian justice, as well as the theory of responsibility one adopts, will make a difference for the implications of luck egalitarianism. For example, social scientists have discovered that working-class children tend to be bullied more in school than do children from higher socioeconomic classes. And while bullying is obviously detrimental to welfare, it need not affect levels of resources (although it may of course do so indirectly, insofar as it affects levels of achievement). Likewise, consider the claim made by some Sikh men for an exemption from the general requirement to wear a safety helmet on construction sites so that they can wear turbans instead. Can this claim be defended on the basis of an ideal of equality of opportunity? If there are other jobs available to Sikhs that are equally well paid, it is not clear that that their levels of resources are affected by the helmet requirement. Nevertheless, insofar as some of them have a preference for construction work, presumably their welfare will be affected. Furthermore, there is an issue of responsibility here: are Sikh men denied the opportunity to do construction work, or do they have the opportunity, but choose not to make use of it (for religious reasons)? Different accounts of responsibility will give different answers to this question.

The scope of Equality

A further question concerns the scope of equality, that is, the range of individuals and situations to which the ideal of equality applies. For example, does equality have global scope or a domestic scope only? Since

the largest inequalities obtain not within but between states, it makes a significant difference how this question is answered. Arguments for restricting the scope of equality to the domestic case usually take either a nationalist or a statist form—that is, they are based on either the significance of conationality or of comembership of a state. For example, some nationalists argue that our obligations of egalitarian justice extend only to our conationals simply because of the sort of relationship conationality is. Thus, they argue that just as parents have special obligations to their children simply because of the nature of the parent-child relationship, conationals have special obligations to each other in virtue of the nature of the relation of conationality. Alternatively—and more pragmatically—some nationalist egalitarians argue that the nation is the largest community within which people can mobilize the sort of solidarity that is required for implementing a large redistributive scheme, such as a scheme of egalitarian justice.

Global (or cosmopolitan) egalitarians, on the other hand, argue that the reasons that urge us to be egalitarians in the first place support global, not just domestic, equality. Consider again, for instance, luck egalitarianism. Being born into a family of poor, malnourished Ethiopian peasants is no less a matter of brute bad luck than, in the domestic case, being born into a family of unskilled, low-income, unsupportive workers. And so if what requires compensation is brute bad luck in the distribution of advantages, equality applies to the former case as well as to the latter. That is, equality has global scope.

Another question of scope concerns whether equality applies to all spheres in society in which advantages are distributed, or if it only applies to the most fundamental societal institutions that are responsible for this distribution, the so-called *basic structure*. The basic structure includes, among other things, the judicial, political, and economic system. While some theorists argue that the basic structure exhausts the extent of our egalitarian commitments, others—including some feminists—suggest that egalitarian concerns reach far into the private sphere and that, indeed, some of the most problematic forms of inequality, such as between men and women, obtain in spheres that are not appropriately covered by the basic structure.

A further scope-related question concerns the nature of egalitarian commitments between generations, including the question of whether we have egalitarian obligations to future generations. Clearly, this last question has important implications for the rate at which we are entitled to use up (nonrenewable) natural resources, as well as issues of pollution, including global warming. According to what is sometimes called *whole lives egalitarianism*, what matters is that individuals have equal lifetime sums of advantages. It does not in itself matter whether, at a particular point in time, individuals have equal shares, as long as they have equal lifetime shares. This view is at least compatible with the claim that equality applies between present and future generations, and some would say that it rather naturally implies it. But now consider *time-slice egalitarianism*. According to this view, what matters is that, at each point in time, individuals have equal shares. This view denies that equality applies across times or across generations that do not exist at the same time. Some egalitarians, however, have adopted a pluralist stance and claimed that both these temporal focuses matter.

The Value of Equality

What egalitarians value is a relation between individuals or more specifically, their shares of goods, namely the relation that consists in their having equal shares. However, some theorists have argued that this sort of relational value is troubling for the following reason. Suppose we bring about greater equality, not by improving the situation of the worse off, but by decreasing the level of the better off. In fact, suppose we bring about a perfectly equal distribution by placing everyone at the level of the very worst off. Egalitarians are then committed to the claim that we have improved things in at least one respect, namely regarding equality. But how can this new distribution be in any respect better when there is no one for whom it is better? Not even the worst off gain anything from the redistribution. This effect is the leveling down objection to egalitarianism.

Some egalitarians are quite prepared to live with this implication of egalitarianism. They point out that they are not committed to the claim that leveling down is better, all things considered. After all, egalitarians may

endorse other values besides equality, such as efficiency, in virtue of which leveling down may be a bad idea.

However, some theorists who are otherwise inclined toward egalitarianism find even the claim that leveling down is in one respect better troubling. They, therefore, look to other principles that favor the worse off, such as leximin, prioritarianism, or sufficientarianism. According to leximin, one distribution is better than another if the worst off individual in the former distribution is better off than the worst off individual in the latter distribution (and in case these are equally well off, if the second worst off individual in the former distribution is better off than the second worst off individual in the latter, etc.).

According to prioritarianism, however, this sort of absolute priority to the very worst off is excessive. Rather, we should gradually assign less weight to benefits to individuals, the better off they are. This means that everything else being equal, it is better if a benefit of a fixed size goes to a worse-off than to a better-off individual. But if the benefit to the former individual is sufficiently large compared to the benefit to the latter, the former benefit may nevertheless outweigh the latter.

Finally, according to sufficientarianism, benefits to the worse off are morally more important than benefits to the better off (as in prioritarianism), but there is a threshold at which priority to the worse off sets out. That is, there is some level of benefits such that, above this level, being worse off than others does not entitle an individual to priority. For example, the rich should not have priority over the super rich. Unlike egalitarianism, these three principles are not vulnerable to the leveling down objection, and so may offer alternatives for those who are attracted to redistribution to favor the worse off, but are troubled by this objection.

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See also [Liberalism](#); [Rawls, John](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Socialism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [Welfare State](#), [Theories of](#)

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Ethnicity and Political Thought

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It is striking, and very relevant, that the term *ethnicity* does not actually appear in English dictionaries until the 1950s. Its linguistic origin, the Greek noun *ethnos*, has no English equivalent, generally being rendered into “ethnic group” or substituted, sometimes in academic discussions, with the French term *ethnie*. The earliest recorded usages of *ethnos* in Ancient Greece did not refer to groups of people sharing culture or descent, but denoted, as in the case of Aristotle’s employment of the term, foreign or barbarous peoples. In this context, *ethnos* connoted primitiveness and nonlegitimate social organization, in brief, the Other. In this sense, it was also a moral term, similar to *goyim* in Hebrew or *gentiles* in English that indicated exclusion, disdain, and strangeness. In its ancient usage, ethnicity was typically a code of difference applied to others rather than something that was used for self-representation. The Romans, for example, used the related term *nation* for distant, barbarian peoples and *populus* for their own community. Only since the mid-nineteenth century has the term *ethnic* acquired its meaning of denoting membership of a group of people with shared characteristics, including at minimum common descent, or perhaps more to the point a belief in a common descent. As a working definition, *ethnies* exhibit, albeit in varying degrees, six main characteristics: a common proper name, a myth of common ancestry, some body of shared historical memories, one or more elements of common culture, a link with a territorial homeland, and a sense of solidarity that is strong enough to underpin and influence social and political action.

A significant difficulty in dealing with the relationship between ethnicity and political thought is that a conceptual imprecision on the nature of ethnicity has always been a consistent feature of the study of the phenomenon. This imprecision also reflects the difficulties inherent in attempting to quantify ethnic affiliation and commonality. One of the few modern political thinkers to directly address the concept of ethnicity was Max Weber, who claimed in Chapter 5 of *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* that the concept “dissolves if we define our terms exactly.” In his discussion of ethnicity as a type of status group, he argued for the importance of subjective belief in common descent and other cultural similarities, in recognizing the phenomenon, and that the most relevant significance of ethnic commonality was its utility for political organization and cohesion. Except for Weber and a few others notwithstanding, ethnicity did not attract significant academic attention until after 1945. The conceptual history of ethnicity has, fundamentally, been dominated by disagreements between the positions of primordialism and constructivism. The former view emphasizes the nature of ethnic affiliation among its participants as an externally given, objective social bond. Primordialist positions also assume, in addition to this really existing status of ethnicity as constitutive and permanent, that it possesses a history dateable back to time immemorial. The constructivist approach has also been described as instrumentalist in that it conceives of the importance of ethnicity as an element of political strategy, a resource for interest groups for aiming to achieve goals such as, for example, the increase of wealth, power, or status. Constructivism, therefore, places emphasis on the artificiality of ethnicity, its fundamentally modern nature, and on nation-formation being a cause of ethnic affiliation rather than an outcome of the same. Etienne Balibar (1991) applied the term *fictive ethnicity* to “the community instituted by the nation-state.” Ethnic identities are regarded as invented or imagined, even if certain criteria of such identities are in some way provable or demonstrable. Ernest Gellner contended that, in brief, such ethnic or communal identities that underpin nationalism are essentially a result of the historical processes underpinning the formation of nation-states rather than a cause or necessary condition. In reality, most modern scholars are constructivists to one degree or another. Even within the ethno-symbolism position advanced by Anthony D. Smith and others who seek to stress the importance of ethnicity, the fundamental importance of

historically contingent symbols, myths, values, and traditions in the expansion of any sense of ethnic identity is accepted. On the other hand, some scholars believe that this position still (wrongly) accepts ethnicity as an objective concept, giving too much credence to essentializing primordialism. Some constructivists, such as Rogers Brubaker (2004), have asserted for the need to conceive of ethnicity without groups, that is, as a form of cognition and action.

Significance, Historical and Contemporary

While the concept and study of ethnicity and its relationship to politics are distinctively modern, distinctions based on ethnotypes, as said above, can be found in works of political thought going all the way back to the ancients, for example to Aristotle. The Renaissance saw the dawn of a new interest in ethnic cultures in some parts of Europe, for example, in the German lands of the Holy Roman Empire (here the rediscovery of the classical text the *Germania* of Tacitus was of special importance). The work of Montesquieu, David Hume, and other Enlightenment thinkers more generally also supposed the relevance of what may be regarded ethnic divisions for political and ethical thought. Yet ethnicity as a first principle in political thought is inextricably linked with nationalism since its late eighteenth century beginnings. German Romantic philosophy, particularly in the context of a rejection of French political and cultural supremacy in the former Holy Roman Empire, was fundamentally important to the modern linking of ethnicity with political thought. The foundational text of modern nationalism, Johann Gottlieb Fichte's *Reden an die deutsche Nation* ([1808] 1978) conceived of the political community not as a social contract arising out of some conjectural state of nature, but as a moral and transgenerational community based on certain immutable characteristics, such as—most fundamentally in Fichte's case—language, the true expression of the psyche of a given people and therefore of incalculable significance. The increased prevalence of discourses of race in the middle and later nineteenth century, for example in the work of the French theorist Joseph-Arthur de Gobineau in his *Essay on the Origins of Human Inequality* and later in the circulation of Social Darwinist ideas, also draws attention to the heightened importance of ethnicity to political thought as the nineteenth century progressed. Socialist thinkers of the nineteenth

century also dealt with what we would now call questions of ethnicity and its significance to political thought, including Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.

Notwithstanding the close association of ethnicity with nationalism in terms of the former's significance to modern political thought—given the centrality of the assumption of natural kinship as the most natural and optimal form of human association as the basis of nationalist politics—the concept has had great importance for other political traditions as well. Twentieth-century socialism, in its many manifestations, has given a considerable deal of attention to ethnicity, as has liberalism, insofar as ethnic distinctions and categorization continue to be a problem for the development of pluralistic societies. Ethnicity has also been, of course, at the center of contemporary debates in Europe and in North America over the merits of multiculturalism or assimilation. There is a certain irony in the reality that, despite the importance of ethnicity to nationalists, ethnic categorizations, distinctions, and affiliations have been a force for serious, even catastrophic instability and violence within nation-states, including within Europe in recent times (e.g., Northern Ireland and the Balkans). While there is no necessary connection between ethnicity and conflict, as Donald Horowitz (1985) suggests, the basis for intrastate conflict often exists in the inclusion of two or more different ethnic communities within one state. With the appearance of the modern bureaucratic and national state, ethnic communities assumed a new political importance. The ideological precepts and practices of nationalism demanded homogeneity. Efforts to produce this inevitably resulted in conflicts since most states, were, after all, in practice rarely monoethnic. In the non-Western, colonial, and postcolonial world, ethnicity has exercised an especially and often extremely malignant significance in politics. As Clifford Geertz puts it in *Old Societies and New States* (1963), “The new states are abnormally susceptible to serious disaffection based on primordial attachments” (110–11). Imperial powers delineated the boundaries of their non-European possessions without much regard for indigenous ethnic boundaries while at the same time encouraging ethnic classifications of populations and requiring some ethnic communities to play special roles, for example, as local elites or colonial military forces. This practice was part of the background of the animosity between Tutsi and Hutu communities in

(formerly Belgian-ruled) Rwanda that resulted in the genocide of 1994. It is unsurprising, therefore, that some scholars, such as Walker Connor (1994), have consistently stressed the importance of the nonand even antirational characteristics of ethnic affiliations. Even in advanced democracies, ethnic typing has played a role until very recently, for example, in the United States, where legalized ethnic and racial discrimination was the norm in much of the country until the 1970s. Ultimately, ethnicity will continue to play a role in politics throughout the world for as long as ethnic distinctions are commonly accepted, and there is no sign of such notions being abandoned any time soon.

Shane C. Nagle

See also [Communitarianism and Liberalism](#); [Community](#); [Equality and Egalitarianism](#); [Fichte, Johann Gottlieb](#); [Gobineau, Joseph-Arthur de](#); [Liberalism](#); [Multiculturalism](#); [Nationalism](#); [Race and Racism](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Socialism](#)

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Fabian socialism can be defined in three important and distinctive ways; first, as a relatively homogenous set of socialist arguments developed by a small group of British and Irish intellectuals in London in the 1880s; second, as the whole range of political doctrines (social democratic as well as strictly socialist) developed under the banner of the Fabian Society from its foundation in 1884 until the present day; and third, as a more specifically anti-Marxist form of socialism current during the same period. This entry emphasizes the first and third definitions, although it will also take some time to consider the middle and late twentieth-century developments that succeeded classical Fabianism.

Classical Fabianism, 1884–1918

The Fabian Society was originally founded in January 1884 by a small group of disaffected members of an ethical debating society called The Fellowship of the New Life. The new group, led by Edward Pease, Frank Podmore, and Hubert Bland, wanted to emphasize the evolutionary, political reform of the competitive system (as opposed to the personal moral reform stressed by the Fellowship) and took a name inspired by the attritional tactics of the ancient Roman general, Fabius Cunctator. The Society was never a political party, but it soon recruited many independently minded radicals such as George Bernard Shaw, Sidney Webb (and later his wife Beatrice), Annie Besant, Graham Wallas, Sydney

Olivier, and William Clarke. Through a series of short pamphlets known as “Fabian Tracts” and an important collection of articles called *Fabian Essays in Socialism* ([1889] 1967), the society disseminated a moderate, reformist ideology that some members even believed could be implemented by working through the Liberal Party (permeation) although others favored the foundation of a separate socialist or labor party to achieve their goals. In the 1890s, a network of regional Fabian societies was established outside London and became an important component of the broader labor movement.

A central argument of classical Fabian socialism was that the unjustly high incomes of capitalists, landlords, and professionals were best understood as Ricardian rents rather than as the forms of surplus value postulated by Karl Marx. Armed with this insight, the leading London Fabians deduced that a combination of progressive taxation, redistributive public expenditure, and the gradual nationalization of key industries was the best strategy for eliminating poverty in Britain, while they also proposed extensive reform of the political system to create universal suffrage and remove the legislative veto of the aristocracy. The Fabians believed that many nonsocialists could be persuaded to support individual measures from their program and that these incremental changes would eventually add up to a qualitative change from a competitive to a socialist system. Hence, Fabian programs advocated many short-term measures to improve the lot of the working class, such as the extension of factory regulation, substantial improvements to the education system, and the reorganization of poverty relief in order to provide a safety net for the sick, the aged, and the unemployed. Although one of the main principles of classical Fabianism was the organization of public services by local government (municipal socialism), the fact that its supporters also advocated national legislation and national standards as the means of achieving their egalitarian goals created a certain tension between centralizing and decentralizing strands within the ideology. Moreover, the pragmatic argument that state socialism was more efficient than free-market capitalism often seemed to crowd out the original egalitarian reasoning of the *Fabian Essays*, and some prominent figures, such as Shaw and the Webbs, even flirted with eugenics, although this was never endorsed by the Society as a whole.

Classical Fabianism was nothing if not eclectic, and its arguments drew upon many nonsocialist thinkers, such as Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, John Ruskin, Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, David Ricardo, William Stanley Jevons, and Henry George for inspiration, as well as earlier socialists such as Robert Owen, Louis Blanc, and Ferdinand Lassalle. The Society was generally hostile to self-styled revolutionary Marxist groups—such as the Social Democratic Federation, a precursor of the British Communist Party—but a strand of argument that justified reformist socialism using Marxian categories such as class and the economic foundation (which might be termed reform-Marxist) always existed within in the Society and can certainly be found in the work of Bland, Clarke, and other Fabians. This sociological Marxism was no litmus test of practical politics, however, and while Clarke left the Society before the Second Boer War, partly because he felt it had not taken a strong line against imperialism, Bland accepted the majority view that the British Empire was a large and efficient unit within which major social reform could be achieved and that it should be democratized rather than dismantled. The outbreak of hostilities in South Africa in 1899 led a number of other anti-imperialists to leave the Society, and for several years afterward its influence waned.

One notable initiative to revive the Society and turn it into a more partisan organization was sponsored by the novelist Herbert George (H. G.) Wells in 1905, although the main upshot of his activities was to disseminate Fabian ideas among a younger generation of artists than had been reached by Shaw's plays. Later, during the famous suffragette campaign for women's electoral rights, a Fabian Women's Group, founded in 1908 by Charlotte Wilson, Maud Pember Reeves, and many others, developed a more social feminism that debated issues such as child labor, improvements in educational, medical and nursery provision, family poverty, and the idea of family allowances. However, a further split among the Fabians occurred in 1915 during World War I when a group of younger members, led by George Douglas Howard (G. D. H.) Cole, finally left the Society—under the banner of Guild Socialism—arguing that traditional Fabianism was too bureaucratic and centralizing, a liberal critique that, nevertheless, kept its followers firmly within the broad labor movement.

Fabianism, Marxism, and Revisionism

The Fabian tendency to reject Marx completely, rather than interpret his doctrine in a moderate, evolutionary manner, was to some extent opportunistic and rooted in the politics of London in the mid-1880s. During an economic recession, a small, vocal minority of intellectuals and working-class activists were able to create small but relatively stable organizations and recruit sizeable demonstrations against unemployment and Britain's colonial policies in Ireland, a phenomenon often referred to as the English socialist revival. These demonstrations were firmly repressed by the Victorian state (there were even a couple of fatalities), and the Fabians concluded that it was vital to persuade the London radical societies to repudiate both the Social Democratic Federation and the more libertarian Socialist League, led by William Morris. With this in mind, and without being Germanophobe, the Fabians argued for a socialism that paid homage to figures who were already popular with politically informed members of the London working class and emphasized the socialist dimension of the Anglophone radicalism of Mill and George—the former being well-remembered from the 1860s and 1870s, the latter having made a popular visit to England to campaign for land reform in 1881 and 1882.

Having said all that, a sophisticated theoretical debate about the relative merits of Marxist and neoclassical economics was conducted in the pages of a left-wing journal called *Today* and at meetings of a group closely associated with the Fabians, the Hampstead Historic Club, before the Fabian leadership turned conclusively against Marxian economics. Subsequently, despite the reform-Marxist strand noted earlier, the dominant strand in Fabian rhetoric assumed that it was sufficient to expose the monopolistic aspects of capital without specifying a detailed mechanism of economic exploitation (the rent argument being a very general point about distribution), while the Marxian theory of trade cycles and crises was generally ignored, presumably because it gave too much comfort to those socialists who still held to an insurrectionary-revolutionary agenda. The same dispute was current in most other industrial countries in the late-nineteenth century, and the famous German reformist-revisionist socialist Eduard Bernstein was actually living in exile in London from 1880 to 1901 and drew considerable inspiration from Fabian discourse. However, the

Fabian definition of socialism (the “Fabian Basis” of 1887) was sufficiently general for some revolutionaries and many Liberals to remain members, if not leaders, of the Society for many years.

Interwar Fabianism, 1919 to 1939

Although the Fabian Society had been affiliated to the Labour Representation Committee (later the Labour Party) since its foundation in 1900, it was during the interwar period that it effectively severed its residual links to the Liberal Party, as Labour became a party of (minority) government in 1924 and 1929. Consequently, the Society became the think tank of the Right and Centre of Labour, with normative debates that reflected the ethical-pragmatic dichotomy and the sociological debates between positivists, organicists, and reform-Marxists, continuing to rage behind a policy-oriented discourse. In the latter part of the period, there was a limited turn to the left, for reasons that should become clear shortly.

As one might expect, Shaw, the Webbs, and other members of the Fabian old guard continued to exercise a degree of influence upon the Society, but a new wave of Fabian academics—not only Cole, but also the ethical socialist Richard Henry (R. H.) Tawney and the reform-Marxist Harold Laski—were increasingly important. The first Labour prime minister, James Ramsay MacDonald, was sympathetic to Fabian ideas, having been an active member from 1886 to 1900, but he had left over the Boer War controversy and never returned. Instead, the Society continued to try to shape public opinion through its tracts, through the independent writings of its members, and through *The New Statesman* magazine owned by the Webbs. Moreover, although the interwar Society as an organization was reluctant to endorse full decolonization, the Fabian outlook was taken up by many foreign students who subsequently became Third World leaders, including Jawaharlal Nehru (India) and Mohammed Ali Jinnah (Pakistan).

The debate between the Fabians and the Guild Socialists continued after World War I, as the latter group fleshed out many of their proposals for workers’ self-management and functional democracy for both producers and consumers. However, there was a gradual rapprochement between the two currents, and *A Constitution for the Socialist Commonwealth of Great*

Britain by Sidney and Beatrice Webb, published in 1920, integrated many Guild ideas into the more traditional ideal of a municipally oriented, collectivist federation. In 1931, Cole and his wife, Margaret, founded the New Fabian Research Bureau to develop detailed schemes of industrial democracy, and other policies, for the labor movement, and this group finally merged with the main Society in 1938.

Other strands of socialist thinking also remained important within the Society. As Tawney's common designation as an ethical socialist implies, he was more concerned to establish equality of human worth as a value judgment and expose the fallacies of consumer capitalism, before tailoring reformist public policies, such as limited nationalization of industry and moderate redistribution of wealth, to take account of this judgment. Like the Webbs before him, he did not expect public opinion to be won over to socialism in one fell swoop and held that incremental reform must proceed in step with broader cultural attitudes. Laski, on the other hand, was more sympathetic to Marxism, more concerned about the dangers of fascism, and more willing to countenance conflict between Labour and the establishment, although he was not unsympathetic to the classical Fabian agenda: for example, in 1935 he edited a volume of essays titled *A Century of Municipal Progress*.

Fabianism in War and Peace, 1940–2000

The disappointments associated with the collapse of the second MacDonald government eventually set in train a mood of labor movement reconciliation indicated by the Fabian merger of 1938 mentioned above. During World War II, the Society played its part in forging a national policy consensus, acting as a welfare state think tank, and developing specifically Labourite policies based on the principles set forward by the Liberal academic William Beveridge in his 1942 *Report on Social Insurance and Allied Services*. (Beveridge collaborated with the Society in its 1943 publication *Plan for Britain*.) Moreover, this tendency to reconcile political differences survived into the period 1945 to 1951, perhaps partly out of loyalty to the second Labour prime minister, Clement Attlee, who had been an active Fabian and advocate of municipal socialism between the wars.

Although tensions between the left and right of Labour began to emerge after the electoral defeat of 1951, a new and inclusive manifesto-style publication, *New Fabian Essays*, was published in 1952, edited by Richard Crossman. Crossman was a leading figure in the Keep Left group, but the volume, while less intellectually impressive than its predecessor, contained chapters written from all wings of the party, including some by future leaders of the revisionist “Campaign for Democratic Socialism” such as Anthony Crosland. Crosland’s ideas have often been retrospectively labeled Fabian, but at the time, when he published *The Future of Socialism* (1956) and afterward, he emphasized the fact that his limited-state socialism was less bureaucratic than that advocated by the Webbs and tried to distance himself from the society, while remaining a member. Furthermore, Crosland’s arguments for a plurality of methods and social goals (education and decentralization, community and equality of opportunity, as well as purely material equality), as opposed to earlier nostrums such as regulation, planning, and nationalization, were not only important in explaining the feud between the two leading Labour personalities of the day—Aneurin Bevan and Crosland’s ally, Hugh Gaitskell—but for later developments too.

From the 1960s to the early 1990s, the Society acted as a networking and policy discussion group for the Labour Party as a whole and remained committed to the Party even when a significant minority of right-wing members of Parliament established a short-lived, breakaway center grouping (the Social Democratic Party, 1981 to 1990) after the election of Margaret Thatcher as prime minister in 1979. However, during the 1990s, the society again became associated with a particular political position, namely the Blairite, or New Labour, viewpoint. Anthony (Tony) Blair, Gordon Brown (both later prime ministers), and Edward Balls were all involved in developing a variety of economic and social policies that owed much to the pluralistic, social market analysis that Crosland had proposed forty years earlier. While the Fabian Society did not enjoy exclusive copyright on these developments, it was certainly near the heart of a sea change in Labour politics. If the original Fabian synthesis gave far more weight to collectivism than to individualism, contemporary Fabianism has virtually reversed this polarity while still speaking the language of the common good.

Clive E. Hill

See also [Bernstein, Eduard](#); [Capitalism](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Empire and Political Thought](#); [Feminism](#); [George, Henry](#); [Guild Socialism](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Mill, John Stuart](#); [Morris, William](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Planning](#); [Socialism](#); [Utopianism](#); [Webb, Sidney and Beatrice](#); [Welfare State](#); [Theories of the](#); [Wells, Herbert George](#)

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Frantz Fanon is probably the most well-known activist and theorist of the anticolonial independence movements of the post–World War II period. His ideas on colonialism, antiblack racism, and the struggle for freedom have had a huge influence around the world and have been central to theories of violence and postcolonialism.

Fanon was born on the Caribbean island of Martinique in 1925 to middle-class parents. At the time of Fanon's childhood and adolescence, Martinique was a colony of France, but its status was changed in 1946 when it became one of the French Overseas Departments. Fanon was educated at the prestigious Lycée Schoelcher where he was taught by the poet Aimé Césaire, one of the founders of the negritude movement, which aimed to reappraise black culture in a positive light. Fanon was deeply indebted to Césaire throughout his life but disagreed with the ideas of negritude as a way of challenging racism. During World War II, Fanon joined the Free French Forces and fought against fascism in Morocco, Algeria, and France where he received the Croix de Guerre medal in 1944. After a brief return to Martinique after the war, where he obtained his baccalaureate, he went back to France in 1946 to study medicine and psychiatry in Lyon.

During this time, Fanon's engagement with the theories of Hegelianism, phenomenology, existentialism, and psychoanalysis, coupled with his increasing awareness of French metropolitan racism, led to the writing and

publication of his first book *Black Skin, White Masks* ([1952] 1967). In this book, Fanon employs an eclectic range of theory to show how colonialism alienates the colonized from their sense of self. He is particularly influenced by the concepts employed by the French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre in his analysis of anti-Semitism in his book *Anti-Semite and Jew* ([1946] 1995). Fanon adopts Sartre's understanding of the way in which the Jew is defined negatively by the racist gaze of the anti-Semite and transfers it to the colonial situation. He describes an incident on a train in France when a young white boy, on seeing the black Fanon, says to his mother "Mummy, look at the Negro! I'm frightened." This moment dramatizes the process by which blackness is objectified and demonized in a white world. The imposition of this white mask on the black skin operates unconsciously to produce fear and anxiety on the part of the white boy (Negrophobia) and a shattering of the sense of self on the part of the black man as he sees himself, and especially his own body, through the phobic gaze of the other.

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon takes Western theory and shows its limitations when applied to the colonial context. Despite adopting Sartre's model of racism and alienation, he demonstrates how Sartre's existential version of being devalues blackness; he borrows from Freud but says that psychoanalysis cannot be applied uncritically to the Caribbean; he reappraises Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's master-slave dialectic and his theory of recognition to show how they are founded on a Western understanding of the workings of history. The book can be read as a dramatization of the clash between two conflicting aspects of Fanon's upbringing: the Western intellectual tradition of defining the human central to his education and the lived experience of a young black man in a situation of colonial rule. The text often goes off on tangents, and its exploration of sexual desire frequently betrays Fanon's own patriarchal assumptions. However, it is a fascinating exploration—through a strange blend of literary, psychoanalytic, philosophical, and sociological analysis—of the ways in which colonialism not only exploits people economically but through its imposition of a racialized ideology, alienates them in cultural, psychical, and somatic ways as well and distorts their most profound desires and fears. Only through understanding the unconscious ways in which colonialism dehumanizes its victims can the colonized hope to find true freedom and authenticity.

It was not until he had qualified as a psychiatrist in 1953 and after a brief spell in Normandy, had taken up a post at the Blida-Joinville psychiatric hospital in Algeria that Fanon's ideas on colonialism and liberation became more radical. The Algerian war of independence started in 1954, and Fanon became increasingly aware of the effects of colonialism on the economic and social structures of the country and on the psychic lives of ordinary Algerians. The disorders of his patients, he concluded, were not simply clinical but due, in large part, to colonial oppression. Hence, clinical remedies were no solution to the problem; only liberation from colonial oppression could reintegrate damaged selves and reinvent exploited nations. He consequently resigned his post in Blida in 1956, explaining in his famous "Letter to the Resident Minister" the reasons for his refusal to work for a state that had reduced the status of Algeria to that of "absolute depersonalization" and "systematic dehumanization." By this time, Fanon had already joined the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN), the revolutionary movement struggling for independence from French colonial rule, and started writing for its newspaper *El Moudjahid* (The Warrior). Following his resignation from his post in Blida, he was expelled from Algeria and went to Tunis where he continued to work as a psychiatrist and also became an editor for *El Moudjahid*. Using the example of the Algerian uprising as his permanent model, he now committed himself to the political struggle to rid the Third World of its Western masters.

Many of Fanon's writings of these years, including his letter of resignation from Blida, were collected after his death and published posthumously as *Toward the African Revolution* ([1964] 1970). However, his two other books, *A Dying Colonialism* ([1959] 1970) and *The Wretched of the Earth* ([1961] 1966) constitute his major works outlining a revolutionary program for liberation. In *A Dying Colonialism*, Fanon explores different aspects of the Algerian situation to demonstrate how a revolutionary national consciousness must be constructed as a necessary precursor for the struggle for national liberation. In his essay on the veil, Fanon shows how the European fantasy to remove the head covering from the Algerian woman and discover her secret (a sexualized metaphor for the rape of the country as a whole) is challenged by the refusal of the Algerian woman to reveal herself to the occupier. This refusal constitutes a significant act of resistance and helps to develop a revolutionary consciousness for the war of

independence from colonial rule. (For a cinematic portrayal of this process, see Gillo Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers*, 1965.) Fanon's analysis of the Algerian woman's subversion of the controlling gaze of the European man recalls his advocacy of a subversion of the colonial objectification of the black body in *Black Skin, White Masks*. In the other essays in *A Dying Colonialism*, Fanon shows how other features of Algerian society under colonial rule—the radio, the Algerian family, the imposition of Western medical science, and the presence of Algeria's European minority—must similarly be challenged and transformed from tools of colonial propaganda, control, and oppression to a means of forging a historical consciousness of liberation and the unification of subjected peoples. Demystification, deobjectification, transformation, and reappropriation are a fundamental part of what Fanon terms the *historical dynamism* of the struggle for independence.

The Wretched of the Earth, probably Fanon's most famous text, became the manifesto for revolutionary struggle against colonialism in the period of postwar decolonization. At the beginning of the 1960s, the Algerian war of independence had entered its critical stage, and Fanon had by now adopted an uncompromising position. In the book, he argues that because colonialism has constructed a Manichaeian racialized order founded on violence—dividing the settler irrevocably from the native—it can only be defeated through a reverse Manichaeism that will itself be founded on violence. In his preface to the book, Sartre calls this, “The moment of the boomerang” when the colonized wreak their revenge. As Fanon says, the end of colonialism will “only come to pass after a murderous and decisive struggle between the two protagonists.” He conceives of violence as a cleansing force in this struggle that will destroy the two zones created by colonialism and prepare the people for a new start (a *tabula rasa*).

However, although the text became known especially for its advocacy of violent revolution, in fact the major part of it deals not with violence, but the dangers to avoid for any independence movement to ensure the successful development of a national consciousness and creation of a unified people. Fanon warns against the rise of a new national bourgeoisie that would simply re-form the colonial order instead of removing it. He explains how the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the West diverts

attention from the real struggle for independence for colonized peoples. He explains how old hostilities between traditional religious communities and the more modern secular aspirations of city-dwellers threaten the unity essential for a successful movement of liberation. He proclaims that the construction of a national consciousness must be founded on the consciousness of social and political needs, hence allying socialist and nationalist principles in the movement for independence. He uses his scientific training to demonstrate, once again, how neuroses are often a consequence of colonial oppression, hence historically rather than biologically determined. Finally (and most prophetically, as we can see with hindsight), he warns against the cult of the leader that will derail the will of the collectivity.

Like previous works, *The Wretched of the Earth* makes use of different Western theories and transforms them in order to propose a radical program for national liberation and the creation of a new “Man.” Fanon engages once more with Hegel’s notion of the unfolding of history to demonstrate how this theory is conceived in western terms and must be reformulated to take account of the historical dynamism of non-Western peoples. Similarly, he explains how, in the colonial context, it is race rather than class that is the main cause of the compartmentalization of spaces so that Marxist analysis must be stretched to understand inequality in colonized lands. Sartre’s theories of being and authenticity are again reappraised through the eyes of the colonized, while previous challenges to Western universalism—the foremost of which is the negritude movement—are dismissed as proposing essentialist myths about black culture (“a national culture is not a folklore,” as Fanon says) which do little to eradicate the source of oppression itself. Yet Fanon’s ideas are sometimes contradictory and his views on the new humanity to emerge from the failed Western version frequently seem to be founded on blind faith rather than a coherent program for revolution.

The Wretched of the Earth is the culmination of Fanon’s ideas on liberation for colonized peoples that he had expressed in numerous articles in previous years and disseminated in his role as ambassador to Ghana in Accra in 1960 (on behalf of the provisional government of Algeria before independence) and as roving ambassador in other Third World countries for pan-African

unity (see for example, “This Africa to Come” in *Toward the African Revolution*). Fanon wrote the book during a period of remission from the leukemia that he had contracted in 1960. He died in December 1961 in the United States at the age of thirty-six, shortly after the completion of *The Wretched of the Earth* and only a few months before Algeria gained its independence from France. According to his dying wish, he was buried in Algeria six days after his death.

Fanon’s ideas have had a far greater influence after his death than they ever had during his lifetime. During the 1960s, Fanon’s message of violent revolution struck a chord with other anti-imperialist liberation movements of the time, although his influence in Africa was not as extensive as it proved to be in the United States where he acquired cult status for black activists in the Black Power movement. Since the 1980s, with the development of cultural studies and postcolonial theory in American and British universities, Fanon has been invoked as one of the most significant anti-imperialist thinkers of our time (although he has had very little recognition in France). Interestingly, it is not so much Fanon the theorist of violent revolution who is championed today as Fanon the theorist of racial ideology. Hence, *The Wretched of the Earth* has been gradually replaced as the seminal work by *Black Skin, White Masks* as the perspective on Fanon has steadily shifted from the political theorist to the cultural analyst.

A balanced view of Fanon would consider both perspectives as, for Fanon himself, they are profoundly interconnected. Decisive political action leading to liberation from oppression can only follow from analysis of the complex ways in which racialized colonial ideology inhabits popular culture and penetrates the unconscious of every individual (see for example “Racism and Culture” in *Toward the African Revolution*). Fanon was one of the first theorists of what we might call the decolonization of the mind (a process that is far from completion today). He was also one of the first to explore the tangled relationships between race, gender, sexual desire, and power. In a more general sense, Fanon’s life and work mark a watershed in modern history: the limitations of the Western project of civilization, progress, and humanity are cruelly exposed when measured against the violent and dehumanizing history of colonialism. Fanon announces the backlash against Western hubris and the rise of new voices in the postwar

period. His theories were sometimes confused, his obsession with the effects of colonial history all-consuming, and his version of liberation politics extreme. Yet no matter how utopian it seems, his dream of a new humanity, freed from the divisions of racial stereotyping, remains an inspiring vision for the postcolonial world.

Max Silverman

See also [Alienation](#); [Black Power](#); [Empire and Political Thought](#); [Ethnicity and Political Thought](#); [Freud and Social Theory](#); [Gandhi, Mohandas \(Mahatma\)](#); [Globalization](#); [Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich](#); [Hegelianism](#); [Psychoanalysis and Political Thought](#); [Race and Racism](#); [Revolution](#); [Sartre, Jean-Paul](#); [Terrorism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [War and Political Thought](#)

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Robert Griffin Robert Griffin

Fascism

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Fascism

Fascism now refers in most serious political science and historiographical usage to a revolutionary form of antiliberal nationalism that in its fanatical pursuit of national rebirth in the 1930s and 1940s, particularly in Germany, played a decisive role in causing the Spanish Civil War and World War II in Europe, and the resulting loss of many millions of military and civilian lives through war, persecution, forced labor, and genocide. As an ideology of total societal transformation, which inevitably becomes a totalitarian politico-military project when translated into practice, it arose out of the powerful growth of ultranationalism in nineteenth century Europe, but emerged fully as a discrete political force in many countries within the Europeanized world only in the aftermath of World War I. It was the devastation caused by this war; the ensuing socioeconomic distress, combined with the collapse of four absolutist empires; and the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and rise of communism elsewhere that had seriously undermined confidence in the liberal vision of progress even within the victorious liberal states. It has become conventional for generic fascism to be spelled with a lower-case *f* to distinguish it from Italian Fascism and for its postwar manifestations to be referred to as *neofascism*.

Particularly in the interwar period, fascism envisioned the imminent realization of a radical, modern, totalitarian alternative to absolutism, liberalism, communism, and military or conservative authoritarianism. It was to be based on the enhanced power of an organically conceived nation, people, or race. By extension, the term also denotes the regimes, mass

movements, paramilitary elites, or activist vanguards bent on realizing this project, as well as the violence, policies, measures, rituals, propaganda, publicism (which in the case of contemporary neofascism includes a vast number of websites), attitudes, behaviors, and mind-sets associated with the ruthless implementation of an ideology of total ethnic or racial rebirth, whether within a particular country, in Europe, or in the West as a whole. The paradox of a supranational fascism is to be explained by the fact that, in contrast to communism in theory (for in practice communism has always manifested itself in combination with extreme nationalism), fascism, though intensely ethnocentric and ultranationalist, can lend itself to internationalism by regarding particular bids to regenerate the nation, race, or regional culture (ethnopluralism) as local manifestations of an epochal, history-making struggle against the common enemies (e.g., communism, materialism, Judaism, Islamism, multiculturalism, Western decadence). Attempts to found a fascist international in the interwar period foundered, but this aspect of fascist thought has become much more prominent since 1945 in such phenomena as Universal Nazism and Eurofascism.

Fascists typically see themselves as engaged in a heroic, history-transforming struggle to combat the forces of societal, ethnic, or civilizational decay (sometimes imagined in overtly racial and biological terms) through the attempted regeneration (palingenesis) of the whole national body politic. It is a program that necessitates a fundamental overhaul, not just of the nation's key institutional structures, but of its sociopolitical culture, demographic strength, and anthropological resources, thereby bringing about its renewed physical and moral health, the ultimate test for which was assumed by fascists to be its strength as a modern, military, imperial, and cultural power. However, especially in the initial phase of regime building, this positive utopian goal typically manifests itself destructively in systemic violence and hostile propaganda directed at the alleged carriers of degeneracy, such as trade unions, socialists, communists, liberal humanists, ethnic minorities, especially Jews and gypsies, homosexuals, decadent artists, the incurably insane, immigrants and their descendants, and foreign religions, though the human categories identified as enemies of the proposed reborn nation or new order vary markedly from case to case.

The idealistic revolutionary thrust of fascism in the interwar period was further obscured to its opponents, especially on the left, by its readiness to collaborate on pragmatic grounds with conservative institutions (the church, monarchy, the conservative right, the bourgeoisie, the army, and big business), which compromised its emergence as a fully autonomous state that had conspicuously and definitively broken with the old order. Fascism's futural dynamic can also appear paradoxical given its frequent evocation of an idealized heroic past and celebration of the apparently regressive values of belonging, blood, and soil in the bid to establish the mythic foundations and roots of the new state and ethnic community. This new order is nevertheless conceived by its most ardent protagonists as an alternative modernity that promises to overcome the dangers posed by materialism, atomization, individualism, liberalism, cosmopolitanism, and internationalist communism.

Fascist Thought

Given the unique genesis of each variant of fascism, and its stress on the primacy of action and heroism over theory and the intellect, it is problematic to characterize fascist thought beyond indicating some general traits or tendencies. Every national variant and each of the many strands within each variant is rationalized through unique syntheses of ideas that have a particular resonance within the particular historical and political culture in which the movement arises. While there is no shortage of ideologues articulating a fascist worldview, some of them elaborated in a sophisticated theoretical and academic discourse, there is no fascist equivalent of the role played by Edmund Burke, John Stuart Mill, Karl Marx, Michael Bakunin, or Vladimir Illyich Lenin for other political ideologies. However, there are a number of recurrent traits or syndromes in fascist thought. One such syndrome is the combination of vitalism, voluntarism, and cult of mythopoeia as positive forces for the active making of history rather than its passive understanding, themes that locate it within the modern phase of the anti-Enlightenment tradition also represented by such antipositivist thinkers as Friedrich Nietzsche, Georges Sorel, and Martin Heidegger.

Consistent with this trait of fascist ideology is what has been termed a *Gnostic* concept of knowledge that sees it not in rationalist empirical terms, but as an action-oriented, corporeal source of identity and historic mission, combined with a reading of the present civilization that is Manichaeian, identifying segments of society or humanity to be suppressed, removed, or exterminated in order for the national community (and in the vision of some fascists Western civilization as a whole) to be reborn. The experience of contemporary history as a battleground between opposing forces of regeneration and decadence also means that fascist thought on such subjects as race, economics, law, technology, or social housing considers specific issues within a palingenetic (often referred to as apocalyptic or millenarian) framework in which the chaos, anarchy, and violence of the modern world is imagined as the prelude to a new age, imbuing all violence with the purging, cathartic quality of creative destruction and positive nihilism. An example of this theme is fascist economics, which took the form of a vast and ultimately, failed experiment in corporatism, and in the Third Reich of a blend of state planning and state-coordinated capitalist activity, both of which were conceived as a Third Way between free market capitalism and Soviet planning and as instrumental to the nation's rebirth rather than a primary focus of state activity.

As a form of syncretism, some fascist thought is prone to draw on elements from the natural and human sciences, such as Social Darwinism, eugenics, demography, and physical anthropology, but may also appropriate the redemptive discourse of established Christianity wherever the church has retained a dominant role in society, replacing its theological-soteriological content with the promise of collective redemption through membership of the race and the historically forged community of destiny it forms under fascism. Rich case studies in the complex symbiosis that could arise between fascism and revealed religion are found in Italian Fascism, Nazi Germany, the Spanish Falange, the Romanian Iron Guard, and the Oxwagon Sentinel. Ultimately, even the lost overtly secular fascisms owe much of their mobilizing power to their ability to sacralize, through mythically laden discourse and ritual, the secular project of building a new national or racial community within historical time, and to the political religion and the spectacular displays of power they generate in their bid to do so rather than to any genuine otherworldly faith.

The appropriation of elements of Christian faith, or the generation of a pagan religion of the race, is characteristic of a further feature of fascist thought, namely its readiness to combine a powerful futural temporality directed toward a new order with elements drawn from a highly mythicized past. Thus, fascism celebrated its Romanity, the Nazis their Aryan past, and the British Union of Fascism the Elizabethan Age of combined cultural, commercial, and political power. In this context, fascism can be considered as a form of political modernism, addressing the crisis of modernity, which in interwar Europe was political, economic, social, and spiritual, by proposing a new rooted modernity. This proposal would create a new or regenerated national community able to provide a sense of belonging, purpose, and hope by bringing about the reenchantment of the world destroyed by such decadent aspects of modernity as materialism, individualism, atomization, anomie, communism, racial mixing, and the loss of contact with the blood and soil of tradition.

Interwar Fascism

In the period between the two World Wars, fascist movements, many of them small and successfully marginalized, arose in most European states, as well as in the United States, Brazil, Chile, and South Africa, the most prominent being the Falange in Spain, the Hungarist Arrow Cross, the Legion of the Archangel Michael in Romania, the French Croix de Feu, the British Union of Fascists, the Belgian Rex, the Norwegian Nasjonal Samling, the Croatian Ustasha, the Brazilian Integralist Action, the National Socialist Movement of Chile, and the Oxwagon Sentinel in South Africa. (The imperial regime that emerged in Showa Japan under Emperor Hirohito displayed features reminiscent of the Third Reich, but was rooted in a neofeudal social system that makes it distinct from fascism.) All were influenced by the success of Italian Fascism in gaining state power in 1922 and creating a single-party state in 1925, a demonstration effect further strengthened by Adolf Hitler's conquest of power between 1929 and 1933.

However, as a form of ultranationalism, each fascism of note was sui generis and hence, peculiarly adapted to local conditions. All interwar fascisms pursued the common chimera of an imminent ultranationalist revolution and frequently used organizational forms, imagery, and rituals

modeled on fascism or Nazism. Moreover, the contemporary impression of a fascist era lasting from 1918 till 1945 was strengthened by the way all right-wing authoritarian regimes of the day underwent a degree of fascistization (e.g., in Argentina, Portugal, Austria, Poland, and the Baltic states) to produce a phenomenon sometimes known as *parafascism*, and by the widespread perception of the Spanish Civil War as a historical showdown between fascism and communism to win the right to dictate the West's future. In the event, fascism was able to conquer state power to a significant degree only in Italy and Germany, though native fascisms shared state power briefly in Romania, colluded with Franco's authoritarian regime in Spain and Pétain's Vichy state in France, and contributed significantly to the state's collaboration with the Nazi occupation in Norway, Belgium, Hungary, Croatia, and the Slovak Republic. In several countries—Portugal, Austria, Romania, Hungary, and Brazil—fascist factions were ruthlessly suppressed by parafascist regimes, while on occasion factions within such regimes (e.g., in Slovakia, Vichy France, and Hungary) called for a greater degree of fascistization.

In the study of interwar fascisms in detail, it is helpful to distinguish between the dynamic, radical movement aspect in which utopianism is most evident, and fascism's manifestation as a regime, wherein considerations of expediency and realpolitik in grafting the new order onto the existing state and society become paramount. The polycentric state in the Third Reich retained elements of the Weimar and Wilhelmine orders and considerable elements of pre-fascist Italy survived in the fascist state under Mussolini. In fact, all fascisms of a significant size hosted various ideological currents, making generalizations about interwar fascist thought hazardous beyond a common commitment to a nebulous myth of national rebirth. Authoritarian regimes also contained competing currents of conservative and radicalizing or fascistizing factions.

The stress within recent scholarship on the modern, palingenetic dynamic within fascist thought, however rationalized or scientized, leads to a radical reassertion of the fascist relationship to modernity. It was generally held by Marxists and non-Marxists alike that fascism was antimodern and backward looking, despite the fact that in several fascisms (Nazism, Fascism, BUF, Brazilian Action) there was a strong stress on the technocratic dimension of

their project. In fascism, for example, the celebration of Romanità was accompanied by major public works, self-consciously conceived and executed, as in the Third Reich, with an ultramodernist spatial aesthetic, to modernize the country's infrastructure and to celebrate such products as airplanes, modernist buildings, town planning, a welfare system, and synthetic fibers. Nazism's technological achievements were even more advanced in the sphere of transport, jet propulsion, weapons technology, and its embrace of eugenics and of industrialized methods of mass murder. Major efforts were undertaken in both Germany and Italy to socially engineer a new national character and a "new man" so as to raise the nation out of the maelstrom of the 1920s. In the sphere of art and architecture, ambitious cultural and architectural schemes were undertaken and imbued with a modernist ethos, even if aesthetically Nazism condemned much modern experimental art as decadent. It is thus legitimate to speak of fascism's attempted social, cultural, and even anthropological revolution as long as the extremely variegated forms assumed by fascist culture are borne in mind.

Postwar Fascism

With the defeat of the Axis powers in 1945, the reestablishment of liberalism and capitalism, and the shocking revelations of the millions of atrocities committed in Nazi killing fields, concentration camps, and death camps, the historical conditions that could generate mass support for a national variant of fascism largely evaporated throughout the world. In particular, the history of Nazism revealed for all but the most fanatical racists the unrealistic utopianism of the fascist vision of an alternative modernity, and the systemic inhumanity that resulted once its theoretical assaults on liberal democracy, communism, cosmopolitanism, and any supranational concept of humanity were translated into radical action. The war also exposed the wide gulf that separated the rhetoric of the Fascist and Nazi regimes from the change they were able to engineer in practice and the disastrous consequences of a national politics based on the militarization and regimentation of society, one that led in practice to invasion, occupation, and in the case of Germany, to the wholesale destruction of major cities. Rather than being the epoch-defining power it seemed to its

pre-1945 followers, fascism now faced major problems reinserting itself into political space.

As a result, postwar attempts to emulate directly interwar fascist parties (but without the paramilitary wing that characterized them), or paramilitary formations (though without the accompanying electoral party) pursuing goals of national rebirth, have failed to make headway. The most important of such attempts, the Italian Social Movement in Italy and the National Democratic Party in Germany, went to considerable lengths to camouflage their historical links and sympathy with Benito Mussolini's and Hitler's regimes and to adopt a democratic façade. Those who recognized the failure of mimetic fascism have been forced to adopt a variety of ideological, tactical, and organizational strategies to keep alive the prospect of a fascist revolution, however remote, now that its political space for maneuver has been so drastically curtailed by its association with the Third Reich. This space came to be further restricted by the rise of radical right-wing populism, which channeled ethnocentrism, xenophobia, and racial hatred into nonrevolutionary, electoral forms of identity politics, however antidemocratic their deeper convictions. Significant radical right-wing populist parties have arisen in Scandinavia, Holland, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Austria, and Italy and in states that had newly emerged from communist rule, such as Hungary and Slovakia, thus draining fascist groups of some of their potential popular support electorally while maintaining covert links with extremists. France's Front National is paradigmatic of this development. Symptomatic of this change of tactics by revolutionary nationalists and racists is the way numerous forms of fascism have abandoned the arena of party politics and mass mobilization to concentrate on extra-parliamentary opposition in the form of agitation, sporadic violence, and terrorism or have abandoned activism altogether for the realm of ideological and cultural theory. This move has made fascism's threat to the institutions of democracy almost undetectable when only interwar definitional criteria are applied.

Initially the most significant of these tactics organizationally was groupuscularization, whereby the typical fascist who retained revolutionary aspirations no longer sought to form or join mass parties with charismatic leaders but found an outlet for his or her disgust with liberal democracy or

state communism in a formation with a few hundred or even fewer active members. These groupuscules had no party-political existence, uniforms, or charismatic leadership, and often just an occasional leaflet to document its existence. Yet some did have self-appointed violent or paramilitary cadres, ensuring that radical forms of ultranationalist or racist fascism continued to be nurtured all over the Western world, and making fascism a rhizomic subcultural factor rather than one concentrated in high-profile national arboreal organizations (with main trunk and branches).

In terms of ideology, one significant development has been the internationalization of the fascist vision of a new world, symptomatic of which was the appearance shortly after the war of various forms of Eurofascism and Universal Nazism, a form of Nazism that sees itself as engaged in a global battle for white supremacy and that has established local chapters in places as far-flung as California, Russia, and Australia. One of these modern offshoots, International Third Position, attempted to form an ideological link at the height of the Cold War between European fascism and countries such as Gaddafi's Libya that they imagined were seeking a Third Way between capitalism and communism. Another group saw themselves as political soldiers with nebulous ambitions of forming a cadre of dedicated fascists, while groups preparing to fight a terrorist war against the system emerged in Italy and Germany, leading to a number of outrages against the general public in Italy and Germany in the 1970s and 1980s.

One outcome of fascists forging alliances with other enemies of a globalizing Euro-American society, especially since 9/11, has been the conversion of a number of Universal Nazis to Islamism (e.g., Ahmed Huber, David Myatt). A completely different fascist tactic for organizing a revolt against the modern world emerged in the late 1960s when a faction grew up around the prolific autodidact intellectual Alain de Benoist claiming to represent a Nouvelle Droite or New Right. Converts to this program, which soon established a copious publicist presence on the margins of mainstream culture, abandoned electoral politics and violence for metapolitics, which, deliberately distancing itself from biological racism and associations with historical fascism, took the form of erudite cultural criticisms of liberal and Marxist humanism and celebrations of cultural

heritage and differentiation so as to achieve cultural hegemony for the antidemocratic right, a tactic known as right-wing Gramscism. This approach expressed itself as a concerted but often encrypted attack on multiculturalism and pluralistic democracy in the name of preserving national homogeneity, primarily through articles and books designed to lay the ideological basis for a future historical transformation in a neo-fascist direction with a pan-European spirit. France, Germany, and Italy have become homes of particularly prolific forms of such New Right differentialist racism, but apart from providing elaborate rationales for attacks on pluralist democracy, these groups have had little discernable impact on democratic politics. The exception is Russia, where Aleksandr Dugin, the main disseminator of an overtly fascist body of New Right ideas, has held a major academic post and enjoys a certain influence on mainstream Russian politics as well as in other countries, such as Turkey, struggling for cultural independence from the West.

Far more significant than metapoliticization has been the virtualization of fascist thought and propaganda through a vast network of websites dedicated to attacking the enemies of national or racial rebirth, a theme that lends itself to images of a global racial Armageddon that turned William Pierce's *The Turner Diaries* into an international best seller of neo-Nazi fascism with an explicit hatred and threat of violence impossible in real social and political space. Cyberfascism is responsible for preserving the most radical variants of fascist thought and for contributing to the radicalization of numerous fascist activists, while also realizing as a virtual community the dream of some inter-war ideologues (e.g., Drieu la Rochelle, Asvero Gravelli) that fascism would become an international force. The purest remnants of interwar fascism at its most radical in thought and lethal in intent can be seen in the terrorist attacks against carefully selected targets of civil society carried out by American Timothy McVeigh (1995), Englishman David Copeland (1999), and Norwegian Anders Breivik (2011).

Fascism's revolutionary force was seemingly exhausted by 1945. Nevertheless, in some of its new postwar guises, it has retained on a highly restricted local level some of its former potency to orchestrate racial hatred, spread fear among ethnic and religious minorities, and both plan and

occasionally carry out terrorist attacks against the decadence of civil society and thus provoke a widespread if temporary sense of national emergency. For hard-core fascists, this decadence still may be allegedly embodied in the traditional enemies of their cause (Jews, homosexuals, representative democracy, the left). Increasingly, however, the growing decadence is attributed to modern democracy's attempted social integration of African Americans, Afro-Caribbeans, Muslims, and other ethnic and religious minorities, its program of a multicultural, multifaith society, its one world egalitarian vision of humanity embodied in the United Nations, G7, and McWorld consumerism, its perceived erosion of unique ethnic identities, the loss of cultural heritage and collective national or racial memory, and the Islamization of the West.

The Debate About Fascism's Definition

The characterization of fascism offered above cannot claim to represent more than a broad spectrum of current expert opinion. The precise meaning of the term within the human sciences, as well as its heuristic value for the study of history, has been highly contested in the past, with each national culture spawning its own debate about fascism's meaning and significance. To confuse things further, the term's use outside academia has degenerated into a crudely offensive term suggesting authoritarianism, draconian regimentation, or fanaticism displayed in defense of a particular cause, as in the words and phrases *ecofascism*, *homofascism*, *fashion fascism*, *body fascism*, *health fascism*, or even more controversially, *Islamofascism*. The value of the term as a precise tool of historical analysis has been further degraded by the fact that the extreme nationalism of fascism and its attempts to adapt capitalism to its goals of sociopolitical transformation rather than destroy it have been interpreted by Marxists since the 1920s as the sign of fascism's essentially reactionary or counterrevolutionary dynamics. The Soviet agent theory treats fascism as the tool of finance capitalism, whereas the Bonapartist theory sees fascism as a semiautonomous faction emerging with some genuine mass popularity in interwar Europe to serve the interests of the bourgeoisie at a time of class conflict and national crisis, whatever its pretensions to do otherwise (along the lines of Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte).

Outside the Marxist tradition, profound confusion reigned within liberal academia until Anglophone scholarship developed a relatively coherent and cogent view of fascism by building on the pioneering theories of Eugen Weber, George Mosse, Juan Linz, and Stanley Payne, later corroborated by Italy's foremost historian of fascism, Emilio Gentile (whose argument was clearer than the famous but cryptic one proposed by Ernst Nolte). By the late 1990s, it was becoming academic common sense to acknowledge the existence of a fascist ideology that aspired to cleanse the organically conceived nation of decadence and bring about its renewal in a postabsolutist, postliberal, or postcommunist new order, an integral part of this process being an anthropological revolution through the social engineering of a new man. However, this new consensus has been vigorously challenged by certain academics, notably A. J. Gregor, Robert Paxton, Michael Mann (of the United States), Kevin Passmore (of the United Kingdom), Wolfgang Wipperman, and Arnd Bauerkämper (both German), and it has little currency in Italy, Germany, and France. Many historians of extremism still use idiosyncratic definitions of fascism, such as Walter Laqueur's use of the term to embrace Islamism, which most would regard as a generically separate phenomenon given its roots in the arch-conservatism of a traditional religion. The new consensus is nonetheless becoming the industry standard approach in most countries regarded as peripheral to mainstream fascism (e.g., Romania, Hungary, Scandinavia, the Baltic States, the former Yugoslavia, and the Iberian peninsula), and it has led to a surge in both the quantity and quality of new studies of fascism.

Meanwhile, despite its best-seller status and its influence in right-wing circles in the United States, Jonah Goldberg's oxymoronically titled *Liberal Fascism* is to be treated with considerable caution. Its mimesis of academic discourse in the bid to convince ingenuous readers with Republican leanings that the essence of fascism lies in the same left-wing tradition of politics that surfaced in Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal and culminated in the state interventionist liberalism of the contemporary U.S. Democratic movement under President Barack Obama, is best regarded as a cynical and propagandistic exercise in defamation by association. Fascism was, and is still in some cases, a hybrid of extreme right and left components, as is implicit in the phrase *national socialism* (a term used by Mussolini as early as 1917). It proposes a revolutionary alternative to liberal democracy. It is

inaccurate to airbrush out the profoundly antiliberal and right-wing content of fascism in order to use it, as Goldberg does, as a pejorative term for maligning opponents on the reformist left.

Robert Griffin

See also [Authority](#); [Alienation](#); [Cosmopolitanism](#); [Ethnicity and Political Thought](#); [Franco, Francisco](#); [German Political Thought](#); [Globalization](#); [Heidegger, Martin](#); [Individualism](#); [Italian Political Thought](#); [Liberalism](#); [Mass Society](#); [Modernism](#); [National Socialism](#); [Nationalism](#); [Nietzsche, Friedrich](#); [Progress](#); [Race and Racism](#); [Revolution](#); [Sorel, Georges](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Terrorism](#); [Totalitarianism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [Utopianism](#)

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Federalism

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Federalism

Federalism is a unique kind of political organization in which subnational governing units share political power with a centralized governing unit. But federalism has numerous variations as it is implemented in countries ranging from the United States, to India, Switzerland, Iraq, and Brazil, and it serves as the foundation for international governing bodies such as the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the European Union. With federalism comes the opportunity to protect rights, honor both minority and majority interests, accommodate diversity, and promote cooperation, liberty, and obligation.

Unfortunately, federalism's place within modern political theory is tenuous and hence it remains undertheorized. Federalism stands in opposition to the most dominant paradigms in modern political theory and especially those in the Enlightenment that embraced the premise that if something is right in one place, it is right in all places. Federalism rejects such certainty, thus allowing it to accept variations in policy and law, whereas the Enlightenment tended to promote uniformity.

The most influential treatises on federalism are arguably Immanuel Kant's *Perpetual Peace* ([1796] 1939) and James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay's *Federalist Papers* (1787–88), but there are many other books and thinkers who have added to our knowledge of what federalism is and what it ought to be.

Kant (1724–1804) wrote about how a federal arrangement could be utilized to secure perpetual international peace. According to the Second Definitive Article of *Perpetual Peace*, a federation among free states would be established rather than a peace treaty or a universal state. The federation would be able to step in and correct states when they were not acting as free states should and to reconcile differences between confederated free states.

Kant signaled a shift in federal thought as he turned it into a way of organizing internationally rather than domestically. Looking for a way toward perpetual peace, Kant asserted that if democratic nations could be linked together through a federative system, then a world government could be created based on the federal idea, which would bring about perpetual peace. The Kantian justification for a federal regime, shared by other federalism scholars, asserts that federalism combines the best of the big and the best of the small without incorporating the drawbacks of either.

In small nations, Kant argued, people feel more attached to their country and to one another, are more politically engaged and receive better representation than the citizens of large countries. On the other hand, small nations are vulnerable to external attacks and are not always equipped to deal sufficiently with domestic issues such as rioting or natural disasters. Although large nations make it difficult for the people to hold their leaders accountable and their people find it difficult to coalesce around a single common good, they generally have stronger militaries and are better equipped to deal with domestic disruptions.

Kant argued a position similar to those of others who came before and after him. John Stuart Mill (1806–73) followed the sentiment of Kant when he supported federations as a way of achieving peace by reducing the number of weaker states and thereby ending the temptation to aggression of competing states. He made this argument in chapter 17 of *Considerations on Representative Government* ([1861] 1958) in the same year that the U.S. Civil War began, thus demonstrating that a federated republic is insufficient to produce peace.

Unlike Kant and Mill, who emphasized federalism for international peace, most of the influential theorists focused on how federalism could help individual nations thrive. Among the most famous federalism thinkers in

modern political thought are Madison, Hamilton, and Jay; Baron de Montesquieu (1689–1755); Alexis de Tocqueville (1805–59); John C. Calhoun (1782–1850); and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–65). None of them explicitly pursued a world free from war via federation.

The best of the big and the best of the small argument was pursued most fully by Montesquieu and given its fullest expression and application in the United States. After the U.S. won its independence from England, the most influential statesmen in the new country decided that the country needed a new constitution because the existing one, the Articles of Confederation, provided for a government that was too weak to confront the challenges of the new republic. The Articles stipulated a central authority without enough power to coordinate efforts among the states, to raise taxes for public expenditures, and to enforce national policies. The new Constitution, drafted in 1787 and ratified in 1788, would shift the balance of power away from the states so that the national government would be able to control the actions of the states when it was found necessary to do so, but the states would retain some of their initial sovereignty. This arrangement demonstrated a shift from a confederation to a federation. *The Federalist Papers*, penned by John Jay (1745–1829), Alexander Hamilton (1755–1844), and James Madison (1751–1836) under the pseudonym Publius, put forth the arguments in favor of the new Constitution, which included a defense of the new federal arrangement.

Publius cited Montesquieu but refined some of his ideas to fit the needs of the American people. The United States was perhaps the first federal regime to be consciously developed from theoretical propositions. Years later, on his tour of the United States, Tocqueville praised the American version of federalism for preventing tyranny and permitting effective governance. Through administrative decentralization, Tocqueville argued, democracy in America would not succumb to tyranny, for decentralization allowed for state and local issues to be decided at those lower levels. This limit on national power, he thought, would help prevent injustice.

John C. Calhoun was an American statesman and philosopher whose most influential work was published posthumously. He agreed with Tocqueville that the key to the preservation of liberty in America was decentralization.

Calhoun argued for greater states' rights for fear that the policies being pursued in Washington, DC, would strip the nation of its federal character and create a single unified nation without states. Calhoun's singular idea was that of concurrent majorities, which would prevent a mere numerical majority at the national level from making laws governing the states. What was required under American federalism, he argued, was majority consent from each state in order for a national policy to take effect. The result would be stronger localized government. Calhoun lost his argument in the United States, but the concept of concurrent majorities has influenced many contemporary academics, such as Arend Lijphart (b. 1936) and his theory of consociationalism.

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon advocated federalism for different reasons altogether. Echoing the justifications first expressed by the philosopher Johannes Althusius (1557–1630), and anticipating contemporary communitarians, Proudhon sought a system of natural communities such as families and guilds that would unite with one another for specific purposes. The state would thus be only one of many affiliations within an individual's life, and no affiliation would be sovereign or exercise absolute authority. The result, Proudhon hoped, would be that individual liberty would be preserved and the needs of individuals and societies would be met. The Proudhonian justification of federalism is echoed by more recent advocates of federalism such as Daniel J. Elazar (1934–99) and John Kincaid.

Nations that are seeking a transition from authoritarian regimes to democracies have turned to federalism as a way to provide adequate representation for diverse ethnic groups. This trend has encouraged political theorists to search for a normative justification for federalism and to incorporate the views of those having concerns over political representation and recognition. In diverse nation-states there is a tendency for one group to use the force of government to suppress another. Federalism scholars suggest that if political institutions and boundaries are drawn with respect to ethnic divisions, this problem can be alleviated. Belgium, with most of its population divided between two predominant cultural and linguistic groups (Flemings and Walloons), serves as an example of how this solution can work. Belgium could be a model for conflict-ridden countries such as Sri

Lanka and Iraq and for rebuilding countries such as Egypt and Libya that are looking for ways to bring disparate ethnic groups together.

The most influential attempts to theorize about federalism incorporate aspects from each of the previous traditions in addition to others. Building on the best of the big, best of the small argument, modern federalism scholars start with the assumption that there is a natural scale to human ordering that must be respected. A nation that is too large will undermine people's natural attachment to place and community and therefore strip them of their inherited identities. On the other hand, a nation that is too small will leave this same group unable to defend itself militarily or to take advantage of economies of scale. So federalism scholars pursue a system that can balance these two forces.

Additionally, federalism scholars recognize the ability of territorial and nonterritorial federalism to address claims by minorities, indigenous peoples, and other persecuted groups who seek representation and recognition. By granting groups a voice in the national government, as well as granting them sovereignty over a clearly defined geographical area, federalism can uniquely help these groups preserve their right to self-determination while not infringing on another group's right to self-determination.

Contemporary justifications of federalism reflect a turn away from the trend of the modern nationstate. Federalism scholars recognize the need for government but are skeptical of the scope and size of the governments associated with the modern nation-state. In some sense they comprise an opposing force against definitions of world order since the Peace of Westphalia (1648) and the conception of sovereignty offered by Jean Bodin (1530–96) and Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679). What started as a way to organize Europe and end tribal warfare has turned into a Leviathan that threatens the existence of natural identities and associations valued by these scholars of federalism.

What can be seen in the rise of federalist thinking at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first is a turn away from the universalism that characterizes much of modern political thought. Just as the nation-state tradition that arose out of Westphalia turned away from the

parochialism, tribalism, and feudalism that predated the modern nation-state, federalism is a force pushing against the dominance of the nationstate. Federalism scholars take as their guides the premodern teachings of Aristotle, Althusius, and St. Augustine with an eye toward modern concerns of liberty, equality, and human rights. This approach makes federalism an amalgam of old and new.

Kyle Scott

See also [American Political Thought](#); [Calhoun, John C.](#); [Communitarianism and Liberalism](#); [Constitutionalism](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Federalist Papers](#); [Kant, Immanuel](#); [Madison, James](#); [Mill, John Stuart](#); [Montesquieu, Baron de](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Power](#); [Proudhon, Pierre-Joseph](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Tocqueville, Alexis de](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [United Nations, Theories of the](#)

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Federalist Papers

Federalist papers

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Federalist Papers

The *Federalist Papers* consist of eighty-five essays written by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, published under the pseudonym of Publius, to encourage the American people to ratify the Constitution in 1787 to 1788. The essays explained the necessity of federalism, limited government, and constitutional democracy, as well as answering the objections to the proposed Constitution that had been raised by those weary of a strong central government. The essays first appeared in *The Independent Journal* and the *New York Packet*, New York newspapers, beginning on October 27, 1787, and ending in March 1788. At some points during the lifespan of the publication, up to three or four new essays by Publius were featured at a time. Following publication of the entire series, the essays were also published by Hamilton in a two-volume edition as *The Federalist*.

Origins in Unrest Over the U.S. Constitution

The Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia lasted three months and ended on September 17, 1787. The result of the convention was a constitution consisting of a series of compromises between, among others, those who were proponents of a strong federal government and those concerned with the sovereignty of state governments. With most delegates disappointed by the failure of the Articles of Confederation, the essential feature of the new document was federalism, the idea that numerous states

could be permanently united under a strong central government with a variety of powers, but at the same time, these states would still maintain liberty for their people as well as the management of their own internal affairs. However, not everyone agreed that the new government of the United States should take this formation of federalism. As a result, public opinion was split on the proposed constitution, which was presented to the people for ratification by each individual state.

Those in support of ratification were not without their own disappointments in the final draft of the Constitution, with reservations as to whether their own priorities were too heavily compromised to achieve the intended goals. The private papers of both Hamilton and Madison show that neither of them believed the compromises of the convention ended with a constitution that sufficiently supported a strong government. The authors of *The Federalist* downplayed their own reservations about the newly drafted Constitution and put forth what they believed to be the strongest possible defense of it. The *Federalist Papers* represent the best possible defense that Hamilton and Madison, as well as Jay, could make of the new constitution to show that what was being presented to the people for ratification was better than the old confederation set up under the Articles of Confederation. In fact, when Hamilton signed the Constitution, he believed that what was finally agreed to at the convention was far from what his original plan for it had been but that his choice was between “anarchy and Convulsion” on the one hand, and “the chance of good to be expected from the plan” on the other hand (Harold and Cooke 1961, 4:253). Madison, despite his public defense of the Constitution, held even greater skepticism, writing in private to Thomas Jefferson that if the Constitution was to be adopted, it would not effectively achieve its national goals and would not “prevent the local mischiefs which every where excite disgusts against the state governments”(Rutland 1977, 163–64). With these concerns about the Constitution, Hamilton and Madison set out to craft their defense, not to be written as a neutral account of the meaning of the Constitution, but rather as part of a heated debate over whether or not to ratify the Constitution.

Rival essays were often presented on the same newspaper pages as *The Federalist*, questioning the motives of Publius as well as the worth of the proposed Constitution. Known generally as the antifederalists, the

opponents of the Constitution feared that it would create an overly strong central government, subverting republicanism and leaving the people in a tyrannical situation similar to the one they had previously freed themselves from under British rule. The Constitutional Convention was convened to correct the mistake of giving too much power to the state governments under the Articles of Confederation, but the anti-federalists argued that the end product, supported by the federalists, was duplicating the features of British rule by giving too much power to the national government. While the anti-federalists were disappointed that a Bill of Rights was not included in the Constitution, it was the dangerously empowering tenets, such as the executive powers, the powers of taxation, the supreme-law-of-the-land clause, as well as the ability of Congress to do what is necessary and proper to fulfill its allocated powers, that would leave the states at the mercy of the national government.

A leading anti-federalist at the Convention, George Mason, refused to sign the Constitution, charging that if ratified it would actually deprive Americans of their liberty by virtue of the numerous powers given to the national government. The federalists argued that the checks and balances in the Constitution that ensured that no branch of government had too much power would be enough to protect the people from tyranny, but those who remained anti-federalists remained unconvinced, arguing that a powerful legislature and an executive with daunting powers did not look like the government they had fought for.

Just ten days after the final draft of the Constitution was signed, New York's governor, George Clinton, started a series of letters under the name of Cato. The letters were published in *The New York Journal* with the objective of ensuring that the Constitution was not ratified, and doing so by showing the people of New York its defects. Hamilton answered with his own counterattack on the opponents of the Constitution, but then quickly stopped his series of letters, preferring the much larger endeavor of writing the collaborative effort with Madison and Jay. Calling the series of essays *The Federalist* took away from the Constitution's opponents a name they thought they rightfully deserved. It was, after all, the anti-federalists who they believed represented the very essence of what was understood as federalism, standing up for maintaining two levels of government in a loose

confederal system as had been set up under the Articles of Confederation. In contrast, the federalists were advocating for a centralized, and powerful, national government.

Hamilton would again trump the anti-federalists when choosing the pen name to be used. The anti-federalists had already published essays in papers under the names of Cato and Brutus. The Roman Cato was known for his moral integrity as well as for his political battles with Julius Caesar. Brutus was most remembered for his role in the assassination of Caesar. Hamilton chose not a defender, but actually one of the founders of Rome, Publius (Valerius Publicola), a Roman consul who improved the city's primitive republican laws, establishing a republic that would thrive for centuries.

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Hamilton asked Jay to help with the series, but Jay fell ill and contributed only five essays on foreign policy, a subject he was an expert in, having been one of three Americans (along with Benjamin Franklin and John Adams) involved in drafting the Treaty of 1783 that would end the Revolutionary War. Hamilton also asked Gouverneur Morris, a delegate at the Constitutional Convention from Pennsylvania—and future one-term senator—to be a contributor, but Morris declined to participate. Madison agreed to help write the essays, and he and Hamilton took up topics for which they had materials already prepared that they had worked on at the Convention. Hamilton discussed the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation in such areas as ensuring domestic stability, adequate war powers, and the lack of a taxation power and commercial regulation. Hamilton also defended the need for an energetic executive and defended the proposed judiciary. Madison advocated for the Constitution's separation of powers, federalism, and republicanism, while also explaining and justifying the proposed House of Representatives. Hamilton and Madison shared the writing duties concerning the proposed Senate.

Since *The Federalist* was written to defend the proposed Constitution, *Federalist* #1, written by Hamilton, promised to provide an “answer to all the objections . . . that may have any claim to your attention,” and would be divided into two sections. The first thirty-six essays would discuss the need

of union in a large republic, with emphasis on the danger of foreign wars and influence, to be countered by a strong new national government, as well as the advantages to be achieved by a federation in such areas as commerce, the economy, naval defense, and representative government in more general terms. The second half of *The Federalist*, essays thirty-seven to eighty-five, discussed the merits of the Constitution itself. Several specific essays stand out.

Written by Madison, *Federalist* #10 is known for its defense of a large republic as essential in remedying faction. Madison's *Federalist* #51 examines the checks and balances and separation of powers put in place by the Constitution for the purpose of counteracting ambition. It is our human nature, Madison explains, that makes it a necessity to "first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place, oblige it to control itself." Hamilton's *Federalist* #84 is best known for its arguments opposing the addition of a Bill of Rights. Hamilton and Madison agreed that the Constitution as written would naturally protect individual liberty through the separation of powers and the checks and balances placed on the elected branches of government. Finally, *Federalist* #78 finds Hamilton's take on the judiciary, suggesting it to be the weakest branch of government because it cannot spend money and has no power to execute its own decisions—and then arguing for the Supreme Court's power to negate unconstitutional acts by the other branches of government.

The *Federalist Papers* tend to be regarded as representing the collective thought of the framers who had debated and written the Constitution, not the personal views of the authors. However, Madison himself acknowledged that the two elements were intermingled. The ideas at the Constitutional Convention were diverse; some states sent delegations that were heavily involved in the debates, while Rhode Island refused to send anyone at all. At the end of the convention, three of the fifty-five delegates refused to sign the Constitution, while others who did sign it would later have second thoughts. Realistically, no one was likely to be completely satisfied with the final draft. Perhaps the best evidence that the framers' collective intent is altered in the essays are the views on the role of government by Hamilton and Madison themselves. After ratification, Hamilton and Madison developed a sharp disagreement on the meaning of

the Constitution, with Hamilton remaining a Federalist and Madison becoming a Republican—the political party started by Madison and Jefferson that reflected the sentiments of the anti-federalists, defending states' rights and rejecting federalist policies such as Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton's proposed new national bank.

Regardless of whether or not the arguments found in the *Federalist Papers* can be attributed to an overarching viewpoint developed at the Constitutional Convention, the essays have profoundly influenced the study of American politics. The *Federalist* is widely admired and studied. Both philosophical and practical in nature, it is even more grounded in the reality of the times than other works examining the purpose of government, such as John Locke's *Second Treatise of Government* or Baron de Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws*. Further, *The Federalist* did not need time for the public to recognize its value. Within a year of the drafting of the Constitution, the *Federalist Papers* were understood to be a guide to explain the necessity of each clause proposed in the Constitution. The essays that make up *The Federalist* are often read individually for their insight into such issues as federalism, the separation of powers, the need for a strong national government, and judicial review, but when considered in its entirety, *The Federalist* ranks just after the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution itself as explanations for the eventual shape of politics and institutions in the United States. In fact, Jefferson described *The Federalist* as “the best commentary on the principles of government, which ever was written” (Lipscomb 1903, 183).

There is some debate as to what impact Publius had on the actual ratification of the Constitution. Authors at the end of the nineteenth and start of the twentieth century considered *The Federalist* as being influential in the ratification process, but this view no longer prevails. By the middle of the twentieth century, it was argued that the *Federalist Papers* had very little, if any, direct impact on the ratification process. The Constitution needed to be ratified in each state. The *Federalist Papers* were published in New York, with few exceptions. A small number of individual essays were reprinted in Virginia, papers two through nineteen were printed in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, and seven were printed in Boston. By time Hamilton, Madison, and Jay started publishing the essays, some states, including

Pennsylvania, had already voted to ratify the Constitution. If the essays were in any way influential in the ratification of the Constitution, it would have had to be in the state of New York alone. However, by the time the state convention was held to vote on the Constitution in New York, the Constitution had already been ratified by ten states, with only nine required for the Constitution to be ratified. Thus, the Constitution was already in effect when the citizens of New York voted.

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See also [Constitutionalism](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Federalism](#); [Madison, James](#); [Representation](#); [Republicanism](#); [Rights, Civil](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Separation of Powers](#); [State, Theories of the](#)

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Feminism

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Feminism

Feminism is rooted in the belief that women are unfairly disadvantaged compared to men and that this inequity is manifested politically, economically, socially, and culturally. Feminism endeavors to redress this imbalance, principally by challenging traditional conceptions of femininity and by campaigning for political, legal, and social reform via organized activity promoting women's rights and interests. However, although this overall characterization has remained accurate, advocates of feminism have often disagreed on its aims and methods. It would be a mistake, therefore, to view feminism either as a unified political movement or as a single philosophical doctrine.

Early and Liberal Feminism (1700–1968)

Before the twentieth century, women had no legal representation and little access to education. Women were economically dependent upon fathers and husbands, and once married, any property they owned was automatically transferred to their husbands. Women had no legal right over their children, who belonged to fathers in the eyes of the law. However, during this early period, advocates of feminism— although the term was not in popular usage until the late nineteenth century—sought to challenge prevailing attitudes toward women that viewed them as incapable of either rational thought or rational moral behavior. These beliefs were endemic, perpetuated not just by the law, but by philosophy and religion.

From the 1700s onwards, conservative ideas about women's nature have tended to focus on women's role as primary caregivers. Women, although allegedly inferior to men physically and intellectually, were said to have a natural virtue that suited them to exerting influence on society through their role in the home as mothers and as teachers. Such assumptions were criticized by feminists including Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Emma Goldman, who argued that women should have the opportunity to participate in, not withdraw from, public life.

The late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries saw a proliferation of debates concerning the status of women, during which a number of participants sought to challenge traditional beliefs about women's nature. Mary Astell was regarded as the first English feminist and was active in promoting the cause of women's education. Astell argued that women should have the same educational opportunities—theological and philosophical—as men and that their roles should extend beyond those of mothers or nuns. In *Some Reflections upon Marriage* ([1700] 1970), Astell suggested that marriage functioned largely for political and economic ends to the detriment of individuals, especially women, who were forced to assume the role of men's property. Hence her famous conceit: "If all men are born free, how is it that all women are born slaves?"

If Astell remained relatively obscure in her time, Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–97) achieved nothing short of notoriety. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* was published in 1792 (1992) and created a scandal that was bolstered by the author's tumultuous and unconventional personal life. Self-educated and financially independent, Wollstonecraft argued passionately for the education of women and girls. In an era that saw social and political upheaval in both the United States (American War of Independence, 1775–82) and France (French Revolution, 1789–99), Wollstonecraft asked why the new liberal discourse of rights should not extend to women, who should have the same access to education, the same right to own property, and the same entitlement to protection by the law as men. Wollstonecraft did not, however, argue for universal suffrage, nor did she find it desirable that women should leave the domestic sphere altogether. The ideal woman would be an educated and rational citizen who was able to combine her domestic and civic duties for the benefit of all.

If feminism's first wave began with Wollstonecraft's manifesto for women's rights, debate concerning the status of women remained largely in the social and cultural arenas until the end of the nineteenth century, at least in Britain. In the United States, liberal rights discourse emerged in response to the combined effects of the American War of Independence, abolitionism, and the temperance movement and became more explicitly activist and politically oriented than in Britain. At the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848—organized by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and Susan B. Anthony—three hundred people (including forty men) gathered to demand married women's property rights, the modification of divorce laws, and the vote for women. The convention's impact was mixed. Wyoming was the first U.S. state to grant women the vote, in 1869, with all other states complying by 1920 (following the Nineteenth Amendment).

In Britain, debates relating to universal suffrage and women's education were reignited in the 1860s by two treatises: John Ruskin's (1819–1900) lecture "Of Queen's Gardens" (1864) and John Stuart Mill's (1806–73) *The Subjection of Women* (1869) (see Millett 1971 for an extensive discussion). Ruskin's lecture at Manchester Town Hall in 1864 expounded the separate spheres notion that prevailed in Victorian Britain: women belonged in the domestic, familial sphere, men in the public sphere of the economic and political. Ruskin's treatise was mired in his fascination with medieval romanticism, and although it provoked criticism on both sides of the debate, it upheld enduring opinions about femininity and women's role in society.

With the full collaboration of his wife, Harriet Taylor (whose name nonetheless did not appear on the title page), Mill published *The Subjection of Women* in 1869. Echoing Astell and Wollstonecraft, Mill and Taylor argued against the treatment of women as slaves, insisting that the legal subordination of one sex to another was a hindrance to human improvement. For Mill, men and women were entitled to equal rights, including the vote.

In the early twentieth century, growing demand for the vote for women culminated in the suffrage movement. Although the late 1800s witnessed a series of important legal and social advances for women—including the Married Women's Property Act (1870) and some amendments to divorce

law—they were still denied the vote. Emmeline Pankhurst (1858—1928) founded the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in 1903. The WSPU embarked on a series of campaigns between 1903 and 1914 intended to draw public attention to the cause of women's suffrage. However, despite the WSPU's efforts, Herbert Asquith's Liberal government remained hostile. The start of World War I in 1914 effectively put an end to their campaign. The vote was eventually won in the United Kingdom in 1920 for women over thirty and in 1928, for all women over twenty-one; this change was largely due to recognition of the efforts of women during wartime. Some European countries had already extended the vote to women early in the twentieth century, such as Finland (1906) and Norway (1913), but for many others, such as the United Kingdom, World War I was a turning point and most European countries granted women the vote in the period soon after. In the United States, after successive calls for woman's suffrage and under pressure from the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA), the Senate passed a suffrage bill on June 4, 1919. This bill was later ratified in the Nineteenth Amendment (August 1920), which abolished sex-specific restrictions on voting.

Reform or Revolution?

After many women were required to fill traditionally male roles during World War II, the postwar era saw a regression to traditional roles. Although women now had the right to vote, own property, and obtain a divorce, the 1950s were a stifling and austere time for many. Women were still deprived of the same educational opportunities as their male peers; for example, in the United Kingdom, they could attend Oxford or Cambridge but were not allowed to graduate. And although many, especially working-class women, were employed, they earned less than their male colleagues for doing the same work. However, in the United States, Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* was published in 1963 (1983) and heralded the start of the second wave of feminism. Friedan established the National Organization for Women (NOW) in 1966, primarily in response to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's failure to take the issue of sex discrimination seriously. But like her liberal predecessors, Friedan advocated improving the status quo rather than radically altering it. The politics expounded in *The Feminine Mystique* can be located within the

liberal rights tradition that emphasized individual responsibility: women must achieve their full potential, but it is the state's role to secure women this freedom. (One of NOW's most important campaigns was for a Bill of Rights for Women [1967], demanding equal pay and protection from sex discrimination in the workplace.) Although Friedan advocated reform rather than revolution, one of the central achievements of *The Feminine Mystique*—in which Friedan wrote from the perspective of women's day-to-day experience—was its emphasis on *consciousness-raising*, the notion that women's experiences should be used to champion political causes. This view was one of the origins of the adage that the personal is political.

Although her contribution to feminism was remarkable, Friedan was criticized for overlooking the experiences of many women, particularly working-class and black women; she once notoriously referred to lesbians as the Lavender Menace. Friedan was also criticized for underestimating the oppressive power of institutions such as marriage and the family. The question underlying the start of the second phase of feminism was this: How do we explain the nearly universal domination of women by men? The varying answers shaped the contending views of diverse feminists on the related question of what should be done about it.

Radical-Socialist Feminism (1968—)

The origins of feminism's second wave were complex and divergent, in both the United States and Britain. In the United States, the Civil Rights and anti-war movements contributed to an atmosphere of discontent and change, from which the women's liberation movement emerged. Disillusioned by the American New Left, which continually failed to recognize the social and economic oppression of women, dissenting feminists began to form localized and nonhierarchical groups, assisted by the Free-Universities and the underground press. Feminists began to see the model of the liberal subject as the source of women's subordination rather than the answer to it. This new brand of feminism was radical: whereas liberal feminism was reformist and individualist, radical feminism was revolutionary and collective. As an activist movement, radical feminists aimed to gain equality for all women and used direct action to achieve this goal.

Radical feminists in the United States held rallies, protested at beauty pageants, and organized consciousness-raising events. The term *bra-burning*—although now acknowledged to be a derogatory media invention—originates from the destruction of equipment of female torture, such as stilettos, at the protest against the Miss America pageant in 1968. Out of this resurgence of feminist activism grew a new interest in theory, inspired by a commitment to social and cultural change, and fuelled by anger at what radical feminists considered to be the pervasiveness of male domination. In 1970, several key feminist texts, including Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* were published. In the late 1960s, Firestone set up the Women's Liberation Collective in Chicago and subsequently became involved with the New York Radical Feminists. Her involvement in activism directly informed her theory. In *The Dialectic*, Firestone argued that women's oppression predated that of either racial or economic oppression and that it stemmed from women's reproductive burden. She appealed by analogy to a Marxist model: only when women seize control of the means of reproduction will they be liberated. Firestone's feminist utopia is one in which reproductive technology eventually renders marriage, the family, and heterosexuality obsolete, along with cultural myths such as romance and motherhood.

Firestone's vision may seem far-fetched, yet the revolutionary aspect of *The Dialectic* lay not in its solution to the problem of women's oppression, but in its analysis of institutions such as marriage and the family, through which hegemonic male power is exercised. Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* was also published in 1970: Millett's analysis was one of the first to use *patriarchy* as a term to describe the domination of all women by all men: "patriarchy is a governing ideology without a peer; . . . no other system has exercised such a complete control over its subjects" (Millett 1970, 33). Like Firestone, Millett argued that patriarchy's chief institution is the family. So long as women's primary role was for reproduction and child care, this justified their treatment as second-class citizens. In other words, the family is intrinsic to the operation of the patriarchal system. Patriarchy, Millett also argued, is the primary form of oppression from which other forms of oppression—racial and economic—logically follow.

In Britain, the women's liberation movement (WLM) gained pace largely as a result of women's involvement in, and subsequent disenchantment with, left-wing political bodies such as trade unions. Like their U.S. counterparts, British feminists became disillusioned by their male peers' failure to take women's issues seriously. Consequently, networks of local women's groups began to hold events designed to discuss women's experiences. This trend culminated in the first Women's Liberation Conference at Ruskin College, Oxford, in 1970. The conference was attended by over five hundred people. Delegates drew up four basic demands: equal pay, equal education, twenty-four-hour nurseries, and free contraception and abortion on demand. These demands were printed on a banner at the first International Women's Day march in 1971, for which 4,000 women marched through London. But unlike the suffrage campaigns of more than half a century earlier, the march (and subsequent political agitation) elicited much success in Britain. The Equal Pay Act was passed in 1970, followed by the Sex Discrimination Act (1975), and the Domestic Violence Act (1976). Grassroots activism proved to be a successful campaign tool throughout the 1970s.

In the United States, the divergent origins of the second wave came to the fore with the publication of Robin Morgan's anthology *Sisterhood Is Powerful* (1970). The anthology—the first of its kind—revealed the double burden of race and gender. Black women, many of them civil rights activists, had been involved in feminist activism from the beginning of the second wave; some, including Angela Davis (a black feminist and member of the Black Panthers), demanded that white feminists address problems of racism and elitism within the movement itself if they were to avoid alienating many black women. White feminists were accused of marginalizing the experiences of black women, as well as failing to address complex issues of race and class. In *Ain't I a Woman* (1981), American author and black feminist bell hooks gave a historical account of the interconnected issues of race, class, and gender from the suffrage movement to the seventies, detailing the ways in which racial stereotypes contributed to the exclusion of black women from the feminist movement. Hooks also argued that white feminists had ignored the fact that many black women worked long hours in low-paid jobs and wanted more time to spend with families. This view, which echoed that of early twentieth-century feminist Emma Goldman, conflicted with white feminists' argument that the family

was always the site of oppression that prohibited women from participation in the public sphere.

Although the UK movement drew its greatest impetus from socialist-Marxist politics, lesbian feminists were involved in activism (including the peace movement and environmental campaigns such as the Greenham Common peace camp) from the late 1960s, in both Britain and the United States. However, many radical feminists argued that the only solution to the destructive power of male sexuality was to reject heterosexuality altogether (see Dworkin 1981). This position gave rise to increasing numbers of lesbian separatists: women who chose relationships with other women as a political alternative to the patriarchal institution of heterosexuality. Also published in 1970 was lesbian feminism's most famous manifesto, "The Woman-Identified Woman," by the New York radical group Radicalesbians. The ten-paragraph polemic claimed that the key to women's liberation lay in women's relationships with other women. The lesbian, they argued, directly challenged traditional masculine notions of women's identity and sexuality. However, some feminists complained that this emphasis on separatism, and the rejection of heterosexuality altogether, amounted to an unacceptable policing of sexual desire. Friedan charged that such separatism was both unrealistic and self-defeating as a general strategy for women.

In Britain, two related strands of feminism began to emerge in the early 1970s: socialist feminism and psychoanalytical feminism. Juliet Mitchell, a psychoanalyst and socialist feminist, criticized radical feminists for their transhistorical, monocausal, and oversimplistic accounts of patriarchy. Mitchell published *Woman's Estate* in 1971, arguing that Marxism had failed to provide a materialist analysis of women's economic and social oppression, instead reducing it to class analysis. The search for an overarching feminist theory that tied together the internalization of patriarchal ideology described by Millett with accounts of women's disadvantaged economic and social position led Mitchell and others to use psychoanalytical theory as a tool for exposing unconscious forces by means of which sexual identities are created and sustained. Previously, many radical feminists, including Firestone and Millett, had rejected Freudian psychoanalysis as implicitly antifeminist. However, as earlier suggested by

the Frankfurt school of critical theory, psychoanalysis, together with a Marxist account of material forces, proved useful in theorizing a dual structure of oppression: capitalism, on one hand, and patriarchy, on the other. If capitalism was perpetuated through a system of production, then patriarchy was perpetuated by means of reproduction in which the family and heterosexuality function as intrinsic components of this system.

The contested relationship between production and reproduction was also the topic of Heidi Hartmann's "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism" (1979). During the 1970s, there was increasing tension between Marxist feminists and those who considered Marxism to be naïve about the extent of women's oppression. According to classical Marxism, the sexual division of labor would be eradicated once women entered the workforce: after the revolution, women would be liberated along with the proletariat. But as many feminists argued, not only did this account fail to acknowledge the unpaid work done by women in the home, but Marxist revolutions in several countries, notably the USSR and China, had failed to significantly improve women's position. According to Hartmann, attempts to integrate feminism within Marxism were damaging for feminism, as they tended to absorb women's experience into the wider class struggle. Some critics argued that the unified system posited by Marxists should be replaced, for the purposes of critique, by a more complex dual system described by Mitchell.

The renewed interest in psychoanalysis in the 1970s and 1980s produced several key feminist texts. Carole Pateman (1988), a British political theorist and feminist, argued that liberal contract theory from the time of John Locke (1632–1704) had concealed a tacit sexual contract between husband and wife, a contract that instilled natural male authority within the family. As the head of the household, the man represented the public sphere, while the woman represented the private. The exclusion of women from the public realm effectively barred them from full citizenship for which they were considered to be naturally ill-suited. In her essay "The Fraternal Social Contract"—a reply to Rousseau's (1712–78) *The Social Contract* (1762)—Pateman argued that Rousseau's vision was underpinned by Sigmund Freud's account of patricide in *Totem and Taboo*: the

agreement or contract between brothers prohibiting incest and legitimizing the exchange of women in the tribe.

By the 1980s, feminism had proliferated within the academy and had infiltrated most subject disciplines. But this academic trend coincided with the decline of feminist activism; the last WLM conference was held in 1978. Fissures within the movement had begun to show in the early 1970s. In the United States, disagreements between radical-lesbian feminists and liberal feminists, along with charges of racism and elitism from black feminists, suggested that identity politics had, perhaps, become internally self-defeating. Similarly in Britain, there were disagreements between working-class and middle-class feminists, between white and black, and between heterosexuals and lesbians-separatists. These disputes took place against the backdrop of an increasingly conservative society: Margaret Thatcher became the UK's first female prime minister in 1979 (although she was vocal about her antifeminist stance), with Republican president Ronald Reagan taking office in 1981. This concatenation of events, coupled with a media-induced backlash in the 1980s, meant that feminism became increasingly fragmented and less politically cohesive than in the 1970s. Indeed, for a variety of reasons, the term feminism itself never enjoyed majority support even among women, despite the fact that second-wave feminism eventually succeeded in winning over a majority of the general public to the general principle of equal rights for men and women.

Feminism in the Academy (1968–)

From the late 1960s onward, feminism continued to gain momentum within universities. The psychoanalytic theory of Jacques Lacan, the literary theory of Roland Barthes, and the philosophies of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, have all been influential in the formation of new feminist philosophies. Postmodern critiques of philosophical systems of representation led feminist theorists to deconstruct the categories of sex and gender and to challenge the legitimacy of the philosophical self, which, they argued, has historically reflected the priorities and interests of men. Talk of patriarchy was replaced by explorations of the contingencies of gender. If one of the most important achievements of radical feminism was its challenge to the patriarchal value system that implicitly subjugates

femininity to masculinity, feminists working from within the academy have further sought to challenge the power structures that create and sustain gender identities.

The sex-gender distinction was initially theorized in the 1970s by Gayle Rubin (1975), and was useful for feminists because it separated biologically determined sex from socioculturally determined gender. Instead of behaviors and personalities being anatomically determined, Rubin suggested there are two sexes (male and female) and two genders (masculine and feminine). This distinction was liberating for feminists, as it helped to disprove the traditional theory that woman's nature is determined by her reproductive functions, instead suggesting there is no necessary continuity between the two.

The idea that society creates the differences between the sexes rather than biology was anteceded by Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* ([1949] 1997). Beauvoir's text was a foundational feminist tract, influencing many radical feminists of the 1970s, including Millett. However, Beauvoir was often contemptuous of female weakness and was criticized, like Friedan, for her desire for equality with men and her emphasis on individual responsibility. Nevertheless, the book contained two powerful insights: that woman has historically acted as man's other and that femininity is a sociohistorical construct, one is not born, rather one becomes, woman.

In the 1970s, Beauvoir directly influenced a new wave of feminist theorists, including Luce Irigaray, Hélène Cixous, and Julia Kristeva (see Moi 1985). The French feminists, as they came to be known, gained popularity in academic circles for their critique of phallocentrism. According to the psychoanalytical theory of Lacan, language is marked by a lack (the symbolic phallus) that represents the disunity of the individual who speaks. This lack comes to represent sexual difference, specifically the feminine. For feminists, the phallus represents the valorization of the masculine and the systematic subjugation of the feminine within the social realm. Phallocentrism has become a preferred term to patriarchy because it draws together poststructuralist accounts of the psychical development of the individual via his or her initiation into language, with the feminist idea that existing social structures reflect the imperatives of the masculine.

In the 1980s and 1990s, continued feminist engagement with psychoanalytic and poststructuralist theories further problematized the relationship between sex and gender. The American philosopher Judith Butler (1990), for example, argued that sex, gender, and sexuality are performative: the outcome of acts and behaviors habitually repeated over time. Thus, sex becomes indistinguishable from gender, as the way that we understand our bodies is also socially conditioned. Butler makes the body the point of focus as a site of potential revolution. However, the idea that woman was a socially constructed category faced feminists with a problem: if biology was not enough to bind women together as a political force—as all women would experience their bodies differently under different cultural conditions—what was? This question has continued to preoccupy feminists into the present day.

Third Wave Feminism (1990s–)

Since the 1990s, a new generation of younger feminists has emerged who explicitly acknowledge themselves to be part of a third wave of feminism, sometimes described as postfeminism because of its criticism of the feminist movement of the 1970s (although the term might be traced back to the antifeminist media backlash of the 1980s; see Faludi 1992). Indeed, third wavers are less likely to have as obvious political allegiances as the feminists of the 1960s and 1970s. However, it would be a mistake to suggest that third wave feminists are politically apathetic or that they reject all of the claims of radical feminism. Rather, most third wave feminisms are premised on a realization that many of the theoretical frameworks on which radical feminism (broadly conceived) was based were ones in which notions of sameness and universality eventually became untenable, as they tended to reflect the interests of white, middle-class women. These notions gave way to those of identity and difference and forced feminists to readdress the reality of bodily situatedness. New discourses surrounding the politics of globalization, hyper-capitalism, and environmental destruction have forced feminism to adapt itself to the changing social and political face of recent years and to respond constructively to questions raised by black feminists, lesbians, and queer theorists.

The interest of the third wave in the politics of globalization is manifest in ecofeminist perspectives. Ecofeminist theoretical frameworks find links between the domination of women and the domination of the natural world. The ecofeminist Val Plumwood identifies a standpoint of mastery at the heart of how women and nature are conceived and treated in Western capitalism, while the Indian philosopher and activist Vandana Shiva has developed a political ecofeminism that specifically explores the fate of women in subsistence economies. For Shiva, genetic engineering and mass farming are part of a masculine culture of dominance, the same culture of dominance that oppresses women. Although she has been subject to the charge of essentialism, for Shiva, environmental survival is linked to the survival of women and both must be premised on an egalitarian model of collaboration.

In the spirit of third wave interest in multiple identities and many voices, it is notable that prominent male academics such as Michael Kimmel have contributed to feminism in the academy. For many, men's identification with female struggles as feminist men is a positive and necessary development; however, describing men as feminists has remained controversial due to concerns that men cannot fully identify with women's struggle. The term *pro-feminist* male has developed as a middle ground to allow men to indicate support for feminist causes without co-opting the movement.

Third wave feminists are often interested in popular culture as a site that reflects social norms and values, but also as one that challenges them. Cultural feminisms blend postmodern analyses and identity politics with an ironic take on popular culture, frequently exalting figures from music, film, and television. Self-consciously and sometimes intentionally contradictory, cultural feminists embrace elements of second wave critique while also emphasizing the ways in which pleasure and desire might transform existing power structures. Heywood and Drake (1997) suggest that two strands might be identified: victim feminism and power feminism. Often, these two strands sit side-by-side, with third wavers recognizing and critiquing oppressive power structures while also defining themselves competitively against other women. Celebrities such as Courtney Love, Alanis Morissette, Madonna, and Lady Gaga, for example, have all

exploited the contradictory, yet realistic, idea of the modern woman as both vulnerable and powerful.

Power feminists have often attacked radical feminists' attitudes toward sex and sexuality as neopuritanical. American writer Naomi Wolf (1998) argues that women must reclaim their sexual identities as legitimate in the face of polarized attitudes toward women as whores or virgins. Similarly, others (e.g., Camille Paglia) have celebrated the empowering dimension of sexuality (particularly heterosexuality). This position could be read as a backlash against radical feminism's proclivity to a type of victim mentality in which all heterosexual sex is viewed as possession or domination. Thus, power feminists are often sex-positive: an emphasis on individual empowerment has meant that discussions surrounding pornography and sex work—as examples of sexual autonomy taken to their limit—have been reopened. Power feminism has, however, been criticized from several angles. Because of their emphasis on individual autonomy, it has been argued that power feminists return to a universalized concept of woman. Some critics also state that a preoccupation with sex, and the ironic pleasure taken in the objectification of women's bodies, makes it complicit in women's subordination and blind to culturally ingrained sexism. As American journalist Ariel Levy (2005) argues, many young women have been seduced by the media fantasy of the lipstick feminist, embracing the iconic Playboy bunny symbol, for example, as emblematic of the sexually empowered young woman.

The conflation of culture with politics has led to the accusation that third wave feminism lacks a clear political motive. However, many feminists now insist that political activism and cultural production are inseparable and that a continuing engagement with both academic feminism and popular culture is intrinsic to the third wave agenda. Importantly, some argue that if feminism is to continue to enhance the lives of women and men across the world, global feminisms must continue to engage with feminist theories from within the academy as well as to form political alliances. The recognition of local, multiple identities and perspectives is crucial to this vision, as is a critical engagement with the past.

Laura Green

See also [Abortion and Political Thought](#); [Civil Society](#); [Contract Theory](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Environmentalism, Ecology, and Political Thought](#); [Equality and Egalitarianism](#); [Globalization](#); [Goldman, Emma](#); [Human Nature, Theories of](#); [Justice](#); [Liberalism](#); [Malthus, Thomas Robert](#); [Mill, John Stuart](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Progress](#); [Psychoanalysis and Political Thought](#); [Radicalism](#); [Rights, Civil](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Ruskin, John](#); [Suffragettes, Political Thought of the](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [Utopianism](#); [Wollstonecraft, Mary](#)

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Ferguson, Adam

Adam Ferguson (1723–1816), philosopher and historian, was born in Logierait, a Perthshire village bordering on the Scottish highlands. He was educated in St. Andrews and Edinburgh, served as military chaplain in a Scottish regiment posted on the Continent during the War of Austrian Succession, and took part in the Battle of Fontenoy in 1745. His subsequent political thought reflected a fruitful tension between Gaelic clan traditions, the commercial urban life of the Scottish lowlands, British current affairs, and the modern cosmopolitanism of the European Enlightenment.

In Edinburgh, Ferguson's interests shifted from theology to philosophy, and he joined a circle of young scholars that became the kernel of the Scottish Enlightenment, including David Hume and Adam Smith. Ferguson's nine-year military career, untypical of fellow Scottish thinkers, inspired his historical interest in ancient Rome, as well as his political interest in the military aspect of civic virtue, a touchstone of classical republicanism.

As part of the Edinburgh circle, Ferguson helped shape the cultural politics of a Scottish generation committed to Britain and its empire, yet developed a distinct Scottish take on the makings of modernity. Like Hume and Smith, Ferguson was fascinated by the psychological and social engines of the emerging market society. Evidently influenced by Montesquieu and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, he sought a new understanding of mankind's progress from savagery to politeness. On the other hand, he was more committed than Hume or Smith to local traditions of valor and led an unsuccessful

agitation for the establishment of a Scottish militia. Identifying civic commitment with military spirit, Ferguson formulated a key concern of modern republican thought: does modern commercial society trump classical political virtue? Will *homo economicus* outdo the public-minded citizen?

In 1767, holding a professorial chair at Edinburgh University, Ferguson published his masterpiece, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*. The book portrays the material and moral progress of mankind, and of specific nations, from savagery and barbarism to commerce, refinement, and liberty. It is a philosophical history, beginning with a discussion of human nature and proceeding to analyze both the success and the failure of well-advanced societies.

The *Essay* aroused considerable interest upon its publication and was translated into French, German, and other languages. It became politically interesting again during the second half of the twentieth century. While its initial success reflected its role as an elegant contribution to the Enlightenment genre of philosophical history, its later significance is due to Ferguson's unique grappling with several key issues of current political and economic thought.

Ferguson was fascinated by the active exertions of the human mind, rejecting Hume's assumption that human motives can be reduced to the love of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. For Ferguson, the natural tendency to play, struggle, and pursuit kept men and societies in the best mental and political shape. He lauded the bonds of society that held primitive tribes and ancient republics together. Commercial and technological progress is a natural staple of human existence, and it coincides with moral and artistic advance, but such historical processes are not deterministic and rely on the active involvement of men in the public affairs of their polity. Sophisticated societies such as ancient Rome could decline and end up in corruption and political slavery, if the civic and military valor of their citizens slackened into self-indulgent laziness. In such societies, public spirit collapses into the private sphere. Neither commercial success nor good laws can make up for the disappearance of civic commitment.

Like other Scottish thinkers, Ferguson took up the notion of unintended consequences, showing how large and complex societies have grown from multiple self-seeking actions of numerous individuals. Yet unlike Smith, he did not trust the invisible hand to regulate self-interested individuals. He did not rest content with the inadvertent and amoral aspects of commercial modernity. Even rational government and good legislation cannot maintain civil bliss if men cease to be self-conscious, virtuous citizens. Similarly, the division of labor lauded by Hume and Smith was considered dangerous by Ferguson insofar as it compartmentalized human faculties into professional skills, made politics a specialization, and dissolved the well-rounded civic personality.

Ferguson went on to write two philosophical works and a successful history of ancient Rome. A brief diplomatic career brought him to America as a member of the Carlisle Commission (1778), in a failed British attempt to negotiate with the rebels.

But the *Essay* remained his grand opus. Ferguson's keen interest in the mechanisms of ancient and modern societies made him a pioneer of political sociology. The concept of civil society that his book helped disseminate is of increasing interest to theorists today. By holding active citizenship to be indispensable and by doubting an obsessive reliance on either law or the economic invisible hand, Ferguson heralded the ethical demands that many thinkers still wish to make to the modern individual and state.

Fania Oz-Salzberger

See also [Alienation](#); [Autonomy](#); [Citizenship](#); [Communitarianism and Liberalism](#); [Community](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Hume, David](#); [Individualism](#); [Republicanism](#); [Scottish Enlightenment](#); [Smith, Adam](#)

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Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–72) was one of the most important of the Young Hegelians, the radical followers of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. Feuerbach is best known as an antireligious materialist philosopher, not as a political thinker. His thought, however, carried important political implications, and it deeply influenced Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.

Feuerbach was born into the family of P. J. A von Feuerbach, a prominent jurist and legal reformer in Bavaria. Feuerbach began university studies at Heidelberg, but transferred to Berlin in 1824. There, he fell under Hegel's spell and completed a dissertation titled *Of Reason, One, Universal and Infinite* in 1828. He taught at Erlangen, but was dismissed when he was revealed to be the author of *Thoughts on Death and Immortality*, an irreverent critique of the Christian doctrine of personal immortality published anonymously in 1830. He never held an academic position subsequently. In the 1830s, he published a number of historically informed studies of past philosophers that reveal his increasingly radical ideas about religion. He also grew more critical of Hegel's thought. In an important article of 1839, he criticized Hegelian idealism in the name of materialism and rejected Hegel's assertion that his philosophy expressed absolute knowledge. The dialectic, Feuerbach now insisted, is open-ended and dynamic, meaning that all cultural, political, and philosophical forms must yield to progressively new forms. The 1841 publication of his major work, *The Essence of Christianity*, made him perhaps the most famous philosopher of the 1840s and certainly the most controversial.

The book's famous claim is that anthropology is the secret of religion. That is, religion has no truth in itself; its truth lies in its relationship to human needs and wishes. The divine being is nothing more than a projection of human attributes, which taken as a whole Feuerbach called species-being. However, people do not recognize god as their own creation, nor do they realize that in worshipping god, they are in fact worshipping their own best qualities. Religion thus involves a crucial element of alienation because humans imagine themselves to be subject to an all-powerful, transcendent god. Despite his criticisms of Hegel, *The Essence of Christianity* retains a Hegelian framework insofar as Feuerbach believed that the development of human consciousness would lead humans to recognize themselves as the creator of god and through this recognition, they would regain the attributes they had projected onto god. In the mid-1840s, Feuerbach published numerous works defending and extending the fundamental theses of his masterwork, especially in the direction of a comprehensive materialist philosophy. Feuerbach remained a prolific writer throughout the rest of his life, but the 1840s were clearly the years of his greatest creativity and impact.

In the decades between the defeat of Napoleon in 1815 and the Revolutions of 1848, Christianity played an important ideological role for the German monarchies, striving to reassert their legitimacy in the wake of the French Revolution. Consequently, Young Hegelian attacks on Christianity presented directly political challenges to these regimes. Feuerbach believed that his philosophy directly supported an egalitarian republican and even socialist politics because he sought to expose the origins of hierarchy—both this-worldly and heavenly—in a false projection of qualities that were, in truth, shared by all humanity. On this basis, Feuerbach was invited to deliver lectures on Christianity in Frankfurt at the height of the revolutionary upheavals of 1848. Likewise, the young Marx believed that Feuerbach had created the philosophical basis of communism. Certainly, Feuerbach profoundly influenced Marx. Marx's first writings about civil society, developed in writings about Hegel's idealist philosophy of the state, borrowed from Feuerbach's model of religion: where Feuerbach sought to return the heavens to earth, Marx argued that the state, which Hegel had described as God on earth, actually originates in the real relations of people within society. Further, as Marx embarked on his lifelong critique of

capitalism, Feuerbach's account of religious alienation provided a template for describing the alienation suffered by workers within capitalist relations of production. Though Marx and Engels both grew critical of Feuerbach, the Feuerbachian theory of alienation remained a persistent element in the deep structure of their thinking.

Warren Breckman

See also [Alienation](#); [Communism](#); [Varieties of](#); [Engels, Friedrich](#); [Freud and Social Theory](#); [German Enlightenment](#); [German Political Thought](#); [Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich](#); [Hegelianism](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Psychoanalysis and Political Thought](#); [Radicalism](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Revolution](#); [Socialism](#); [Young Hegelians](#)

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Nedim Nomer Nedim Nomer

Fichte, Johann Gottlieb

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Fichte, Johann Gottlieb

A leading figure in idealism and romanticism in Germany at the end of the eighteenth century, Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814) was an innovative and influential political thinker as well. The central thesis of his political thought was that the social-political world is not a realm in which individuals seek to realize their already formed interests; rather, that this world is constitutive of the identities as well as interests of individuals. This thesis became a centerpiece of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's social and political thought and the subsequent political theory traditions that follow Hegel. Moreover, Fichte was one of the first political theorists to offer a systematic treatment of the welfare state, embodying his concern for material equality for all. In an oft-criticized yet influential later work, Fichte considered a shared national or cultural identity as equally fundamental to the formation of a society.

Fichte presented his political views in a number of different kinds of writings, but above all in his *Rectification of the Public's Judgment of the French Revolution* (1793–94), *Foundations of Natural Right* (1796–97), *The Closed Commercial State* (1800), and *Addresses to the German Nation* (1807–08). The first book was essentially a monograph devoted to the vindication of the right of revolution, earning Fichte the label Jacobin in his own time. *Foundations of Natural Right*, on the other hand, was a comprehensive treatise that included a deduction of individual rights and a discussion of the first principles upon which political authority is to be built, the tenets of parenting and education in the family, public finance,

criminal justice, and inter-societal relations. It was in the *Foundations* that Fichte systematically formulated his thesis that true self-awareness is possible only through social interaction. *The Closed Commercial State* had a narrower scope as it focused on the public regulation of the economy, developing ideas already stated in the *Foundations*. The last and most controversial of these works, *Addresses to the German Nation*, was concerned with the cultural or national unity of a people rather than with narrowly political questions of legitimacy and public policy.

Although these works differed in their focus and style of argumentation, they all dealt with a particular aspect or manifestation of human freedom in the social and political world. Fichte's early work on the French Revolution focused on the political implications of moral autonomy that he defined in reference to Immanuel Kant. The *Foundations* and *Closed Commercial State*, on the other hand, were concerned with the regulation and balancing of individual liberties or rights regardless of their moral status. Finally, the *Addresses* dealt with the conditions of collective or national freedom and in particular, with how a nation can achieve self-sufficiency in its language and culture, as well as in its political and economic institutions.

The emphasis on freedom in all these works was no accident but derived from the unifying and legitimating supposition of his entire philosophy; namely, that all intentional deeds of human beings, and the concepts or maxims that systematically guide such deeds, stem from the self-constitutive or self-positing acts of human consciousness. Fichte believed that this supposition would help to construct a unified and coherent account of the human being because self-positing mental acts make possible not only the scientific or theoretical activities (such as logic and the natural sciences) that human beings undertake, but also their decisions and actions in the social and political world. Relatedly, Fichte not only intended his own work for academic consumption, but also hoped its reading would help ordinary human beings to achieve self-awareness.

However, Fichte scholarship is divided on how exactly Fichte construed the unity of his philosophy. This question arises in part because Fichte called for a separation of legal theory from moral theory. In addition, parts of Fichte's political thought, such as those concerning the tasks of political

government and what establishes social cohesion, appear to have changed over time. Critics, ever since Hegel, have argued that Fichte's political thought is neither internally coherent nor in harmony with his other works. More charitable interpreters, by contrast, maintain that Fichte's entire philosophy, including his political and moral theory, is constructed around some core principles, such as the idea of self-positing and the rules of inference despite the apparent discontinuities in that body of work.

Whatever the outcome of this debate, Fichte's political thought could suitably be regarded as part of European political theory traditions (such as those of republicanism and social contract theory) that take freedom to be the organizing principle of social and political order. Further, due to their emphasis on both individual and collective forms of freedom and on central government, Fichte's political writings continue to inspire political theorists who seek to reconcile individual and collective rights.

Nedim Nomer

See also [Contract Theory](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [French Revolution](#), [Political Thought of the](#); [German Enlightenment](#); [German Political Thought](#); [Hegel](#), [Georg Wilhelm Friedrich](#); [Kant](#), [Immanuel](#); [Nationalism](#); [Republicanism](#); [Rights](#), [Natural and Human](#); [Socialism](#); [Welfare State](#), [Theories of the](#)

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Michel Foucault (1926–84) was one of the most important European thinkers of the twentieth century. Born in Poitiers, France, Foucault is often regarded as the epitome of the Parisian intellectual at the center of public life in France in the decades after World War II. However, his intellectual influence, both in life and in death, extended well beyond France.

Foucault's work defies easy categorization. It focused on a wide range of topics, including the character of literary texts; the philosophy of knowledge; the nature of power; the history of madness, medicine, and psychology; the variety of forms of punishment and discipline in the modern world; and the history of sexuality from ancient Greece to psychoanalysis. Foucault's writing moves seamlessly across a number of different disciplinary boundaries, most notably between philosophy and history. Since his death, however, he has increasingly come to be seen as an important political theorist in his own right.

The significance of Foucault's work for contemporary political thought lies in three main areas. First, his understanding of power in general brings into question the established view of power in modern political theory as an essentially negative phenomenon and the medium of domination. While his earlier work tended to assume that power was repressive in nature, from the mid-1970s he came to a clearer view of the productive aspect of power. Exercises of power often create new forms of knowledge and practice that alter the (self-)identity of subjects. The outcome of particular instances of the exercise of power is always uncertain and open, to the extent that the

dominant position of powerful agents in the relation can be undermined by their own conduct. Thus, in every power relation, there is the possibility of resistance and transformation. Nonetheless, Foucault claimed that the understanding of power in the abstract as either a negative or a positive phenomenon was, in itself, of little interest. Rather, the analysis of power must focus on concrete power relations as they appear in particular historical and social contexts.

Second, and following from this situationally anchored perspective, his later work turned to the question of the various forms of power relations that have shaped political, legal, and economic practices in Western modernity. Key in his approach is the concept of sovereignty. In early modern Europe, the idea of sovereignty was used to legitimize royal absolutism, attributing a plenitude of power to the sovereign as the unquestioned source of authority in a territory. Yet Foucault argues that modern political and legal theory, in accepting the notion of the sovereign exercising a plenitude of power, has been blind to those relations of power that have formed outside of the purview of the sovereign and that have been key in shaping the character of modernity. Such relations of power operate on a microlevel, disciplining individual bodies according to forms of knowledge intended to achieve the effective employment of human labor and resources. Thus, the Benthamite notion of the panopticon, which emerges from the utilitarian imperative for the most efficient organization of social and economic relations possible, is embodied in a system of surveillance that ensures the regimentation and routinization of individual conduct in institutions such as prisons, factories, hospitals, asylums, and schools. Foucault's concept of biopower, in contrast, captures the idea of a form of power relations intertwined with the government of the population of a territory as a whole. Thus, scientific and social-scientific knowledge and practice concerned with public health, rates of fertility, morbidity and mortality, social risk, and security come to play a central role in modern societies, particularly with the advent of the welfare state from the late nineteenth century.

Third, Foucault's reflections on these various forms of power relations brought to the fore the question of government, or the supervision of people's conduct. Government, in this sense, is much broader than the activities of the executive agents of the state. The term *governmentality* was

coined by Foucault to capture the sense in which government in modern societies operates as a pervasive form of rationality or an array of techniques for shaping the conduct of citizens. Modern government of conduct is not simply a matter of power shaping subjects through external impediments or inducements, but rather, as suggested by Sigmund Freud's concept of the superego, the self-government of individuals to meet internally formulated ends. The importance of self-government is clear in Foucault's last works on the care of the self, but it is also evident in his concerns with the rise of neoliberalism and the conception of individual responsibility for the self as both moral and economic actor.

Jason Edwards

See also [Civil Society](#); [Freud and Social Theory](#); [Neoliberalism](#); [Power](#); [Punishment](#); [Radicalism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Charles Fourier (1771–1837) was the first influential French communitarian socialist. He produced the most damning critique of contemporary society and proposed the most radical reform of any thinker in the early nineteenth century.

Life and Works

Fourier was born into a prosperous merchant family in Besançon and earned his living, reluctantly, in the same trade in Lyon, unable to devote himself entirely to writing until a few years before his death. Between 1808 and 1827, he wrote four substantial books in which he expounded his theory of how society could advance from the social conflict of his day to harmony. The first, *Théorie des Quatre Mouvements et destinées générales*, was published anonymously in Besançon in 1808 (1967) in two volumes. His next major work, *Traité de l'association domestique agricole*, appeared in Paris in 1822, also in two volumes. He brought out a third single-volume book, *Le Nouveau monde industriel et sociétaire, ou invention du procédé, d'industrie attrayante et naturelle distribuée en séries passionnées*, in 1829 (1973). In 1835 to 1836 came his last work, *La fausse industrie morcelée*. All stated the same basic criticism of society and his unique solutions.

In addition, Fourier wrote many long articles on the same themes, some of which were published in the early 1830s in the Fourierist journals edited by

his followers, but most did not appear in his lifetime. The journals themselves were forced out of production mainly by the dead weight of Fourier's prose. A fourteen-page summary of his ideas, *Political Economy Made Easy*, was published in London in 1828 by the London Cooperative Society, probably translated by the Owenite William Thompson.

Until his ideas were taken up by Victor Considérant in 1832, at most fifty devoted acolytes in Besançon had read his works, even though he always sent copies to leading politicians. This was not because of the content; he was innovative, imaginative, and sometimes very funny. What he proposed was an economic and sexual revolution, shocking for a society brought up on liberal economics, the Roman Catholic Church, and monogamous marriage. The eroticism of his *Nouveau monde amoureux* so shocked his followers that it was never published at the time and was even left out of his collected works in 1966. It did not appear in print until a year later, with a second edition in 1990.

Unfortunately for sales of his books, Fourier favored nonsequential pagination and semimathematical symbols and arguments. He invented words, without explanation or warning, which, then as now, confuse even those whose first language is French. His text would switch randomly between Roman and Arabic numerals and a variety of typefaces, and letters might appear upside down or lying on their sides, as if some demon had shuffled and rearranged the text. His books read like the minutes of a secret society or the endless stream of consciousness outpourings of an unconscious mind. His greatest vice was verbose repetition. Some of his ideas are hilarious, although a reader is never sure which inventions he intended to be a joke. He claimed that planets have aromas for long-distance copulation. He argued that the earth was sick, that its climate was deteriorating, the ice-caps melting—claims that have resonance today—but Fourier went on to write that there was a rescue column of 102 planets moving toward the earth. In harmony, all the seas would turn to pink lemonade. All this imaginative, romantic hyperbole may have been just fun for Fourier, but his readers are still never quite sure, and those who mention the humor are liable to be castigated for belittling this autodidact.

A Program for Harmony

Nevertheless, Fourier's condemnation of capitalism and existing family norms was devastating. His solutions wake up the most torpor-laden undergraduate audience today. Having lived through the repeated upheavals that followed the 1789 Revolution and the bloody Terror of 1793 to 1794, Fourier was convinced that the social crisis of the early nineteenth century was all in the mind. Human misery existed, not because of economic inequalities, but because the human psyche was inhibited by traditional social norms. When these constraints were removed, people would instantly live in harmony, without the need for police, courts of law, or repressive moral codes. Like many contemporaries, he believed that human society was progressive, but that there were backward as well as forward steps in social evolution. He started from the premise that there were laws governing social relationships parallel to those in the physical world described by Isaac Newton and others. Once the science of social relations was understood—and he was the good fairy to explain it—and changes implemented, all the ills would melt away. Fourier believed that humans living in equilibrium with their natures would be totally happy and content. He blamed the social problems of his day on capitalism and marriage. Both institutions, he argued, were contrary to nature. No reform of society would work until the worst evil, the lowly status of women, was addressed.

Fourier's solution was to create new, ideal communities. He was by no means the first utopian. The concept had long been familiar. Like most utopians, he argued that his scheme was essentially scientific and could be achieved peacefully, without conflict, and for Fourier, with no attention to a divinity. He proposed *phalanges*—experimental, self-governing, share-holding, profit-sharing communal democracies. Each would consist of 1,620 people. Citizens would be carefully chosen to represent a perfect balance of combinations of the three hundred passions that existed in varying proportions in all humans. Psychological harmony in the commune was fundamental. Fourier was well ahead of his time in emphasizing such concepts. Passional equilibrium would be accompanied by economic satisfaction, but unlike other utopian socialists, such as Etienne Cabet, Fourier did not consider humans required financial equality to be content.

The phalange would be privately owned. The property and buildings would be provided by an individual or group. The original owners or investors

would maintain their property rights and receive a dividend from the profits each year. The rest of the profits would be shared in a fixed ratio between all the members, with a percentage reserved for mutual aid needs and reinvestment. Fourier always emphasized the economic viability of his proposal and always hoped to convince an investor. Economies of scale would flow from communal production. The members would hold daily meetings to agree on agricultural and industrial targets and set up communal work teams. Work would be unalloyed joy. All members would be entirely content because they would decide what to do, and work would be subdivided so that everyone changed their activity each hour. The communal organization would avoid middlemen and speculators, who for Fourier were economic parasites, the most harmful aspects of emerging capitalism. Economic and social inequalities would remain, but Fourier argued that class and financial differences would be irrelevant if everyone was achieving their potential.

The architectural design of the phalange was paramount to counteract individualism and promote cooperation. Specially designed communal buildings would be constructed for everything from eating to attending the opera, and especially, for sex. Ironically, surviving designs show a strong monastic influence on phalange architecture. Sleep was the only solitary function, taking place between 10:30 pm and 3:30 am. Fourier was convinced that this amount of sleep was adequate when people were happy. All other activities were communal. There would be no marriage. Sexual relations would be temporary, fluid, allow for experimentation, and therefore, happy; all jealousy, dishonesty, and tensions would evaporate. Gender variations would be accommodated, and the elderly would not be excluded from sexual pleasures. Older, more experienced members would offer altruistic sex experience. Sex would be fun for all, with traditional moral constraints removed. Meals, prepared and eaten communally, would provide gastronomic delights five times daily. Cookery competitions would be a high point in the social calendar. Women would have the opportunity to contribute to the work of the phalange according to their abilities and inclinations.

Education was central to Fourier's new world, as it was to most of the reformers of his day. He believed that education should be primarily

vocational and should not be confined to a classroom. Very different from other reform programs, it was predicated on two revolutionary premises, communal rearing and equal opportunities, regardless of class or gender. Although natural mothers could spend time with *nourrissons* (children from birth until 18 months), the children would be reared not by their natural mothers, as Jean-Jacques Rousseau had demanded, but by professional care givers (mostly women) who were psychologically suited to the work (mostly women). A system of communal nursemaids would be economical because mothers would be free to work. Men would feel paternal affection for the children of all their sexual partners. The phalange would accept responsibility for children until they were three years old; then, Fourier imagined, children would be economically self-supporting. At four, when they were likely to be nothing of the sort, he named them *chérubins*, and at six and a half, and even less probable, they became *séraphins*.

From the middle of their second year, children would learn to use tiny hammers. At three, they would be placed in special workshops, enjoying very simple tasks such as grading peas by size and gradually increasing their range of activities. Even a bachelor philosopher recognized that although children of this age liked getting involved, they were masters of *furetage* (messing about) and delighted in breaking things. They were also possessed of *singerie*, the ability to imitate, which made them able to learn simple practical jobs very young. Their best teachers at first would be slightly older children, an approach similar to that used in the Lancaster system in England, in which adults taught superior students (monitors), who in turn taught the weaker students. Children would be grouped in *petites hordes*, those who enjoyed rough and tumble and loved to be dirty, and *petites bandes*, those who like to stay neat and clean. The former would undertake some of the cleaning and dirty jobs. Fourier admitted that there was often likely to be a gender difference between the two. When they were old enough, children would work alongside adults. Fourier expected considerable benefits from fathers and sons working together. Schoolwork would not be introduced until a child had acquired a range of practical skills; otherwise, he warned, children would regard a book as a prison.

There would be no call for moral education because Fourier believed that the complete liberation of the passions would guarantee that everyone

would be satisfied and happy. Stripped of their odd language and daft ideas that children of three could support themselves by work, Fourier's ideas on education were radical, but sensible, and aspects certainly recur in later educational theory. However, because most of Fourier's language was so obscure, his theories on education did not have much publicity until after 1831, and then the Fourierists developed them out of all recognition, promoting reform schools for young offenders—a sad and ironic outcome, given Fourier's confidence that punishment and moral condemnation would be irrelevant in his phalange.

Fourier's Sources and Influence

Fourier always claimed that his ideas were unique and as valuable as those of Newton and that his thought owed nothing to earlier writers. This claim was obviously unfounded. He knew of Robert Owen's New Lanark experiment, but believed that he had much to teach Owen and nothing to learn. He sent Owen copies of his books. They met only briefly in Paris in 1837 just before Fourier's death. He had no contact with Cabet, who shortly after Fourier's death invented a very different utopian community, Icarie. For a man who dreamed of intense human sociability, Fourier was a loner intellectually and personally. He never married and had virtually no friends.

Fourier might have died with his ideas unknown, until, by chance, they came to the attention of Henri de Saint-Simon and made a considerable impression on his followers, the Saint-Simonians. They adopted some of his ideas on the liberation of workers and women, but in November 1831, the majority disagreed so violently with a call for trial marriage from their self-imposed leader (Prosper Enfantin) that they broke away to align themselves in a Fourierist school. The dominant figure was Victor Considérant, who learned of Fourier's theories when lodging as a high school student with Fourier's devoted disciple, Clarisse Vigoureux, a rich widow. Fourier's theories were radically toned down by his new followers. Influential women members ensured that marriage and a thoroughly Christian God became cornerstones of a moral, not a natural, social order. Fourier had always claimed that his dream world was an economically viable program. The Fourierists tried to make it work. Two doctors donated an estate, and an experimental phalange was opened at Condé-sur-Vesgre, near Paris, in

1832, but Fourier had no faith in it, and it collapsed within a year. A Fourierist commune was set up in Rumania in 1835, but it too was short lived.

In the 1830s, the Fourierists in France abandoned privately financed communes and began to focus on state-run public works programs. They campaigned for the recognition of the state's obligation to organize work for the jobless and for the idea that everyone had a right to work. Fourierist socialist theory flowed from the pen of Considérant and others in books, pamphlets, a periodical that began life as *Le Phalanstère* (1832–49), financed by Vigoureux and edited by Considérant, and the newspaper *La Démocratie Pacifique* (1843–51). Fourierist ideas diverged so far from those of Fourier that disciples and master were frequently at odds. After their failure to promote socialist reforms in the Second Republic Considérant and Vigoureux, and indeed Cabet (but separately) participated in experimental communes. Thirty-five experimental phalanges ran for several years in America, and there were brief attempts in Australia.

Some early feminists such as Flora Tristan welcomed Fourier's ideas, but other early socialists were confused by Fourier's eroticism, his humor, and his imaginings. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels focused on Fourier as a critic of capitalism and an advocate of producer cooperatives. Fourier was rediscovered in the 1960s by the women's liberation movement. An American scholar, Jonathan Beecher, wrote two substantial biographies, the first on Fourier, the next on Considérant. In 1990, an Association des études fourieristes was founded, with a journal, *Cahiers Charles Fourier*, which runs a well-organized website in which both Fourier and the Fourierists are honored.

Pamela Pilbeam

See also [Alienation](#); [Capitalism](#); [Communism](#), [Varieties of](#); [Community](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Engels, Friedrich](#); [Feminism](#); [French Enlightenment](#); [French Political Thought](#); [French Revolution](#), [Political Thought of the](#); [Freud and Social Theory](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Owen, Robert](#); [Rousseau, Jean-Jacques](#); [Saint-Simon, Henri de](#); [Socialism](#); [Utopianism](#)

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Francisco Franco Bahamonde (1892–1975) was a Spanish military officer who participated in the military rebellion that sparked the Spanish Civil War in 1936 and, emerged as the country's dictator at the war's conclusion in 1939, a position he held until his death in 1975. Franco's birth into a modest middle-class naval family in the coastal city of El Ferrol prefigured a military career, but there was little to foretell his political ascent to become the central figure of twentieth-century Spanish history. Unlike the Italian fascist Benito Mussolini or the Cuban communist Fidel Castro, two dictators with whom he is frequently compared, the young Franco did not appear to harbor any particular political ambition or develop some ideological vision. In fact, Franco never developed a full-fledged political ideology, and the justification of his regime morphed over time to keep him in power.

In 1907, Franco enrolled at the Military Academy of Toledo, graduating in 1910. Although a mediocre student, he advanced rapidly through the ranks of the officer corps in the army of the Spanish colonial protectorate of Morocco, reaching the rank of brigadier general by 1926. Franco became lieutenant commander of the Spanish Foreign Legion, a corps of shock troops founded in 1920. There he gained considerable prestige from his success recovering Moroccan territories Spain had lost in earlier defeats. The Foreign Legion is where Franco developed his core ideology: a strong military-nationalist ethos that regarded the military as the highest embodiment of the nation's values and strength.

When the downfall of King Alfonso XIII in 1931 swept in the left-liberal Second Republic, Franco displayed both loyalty and hostility to the new regime. He reacted bitterly to its decision in July 1931 to close the Military Academy of Zaragoza, a bastion of neoimperialist and conservative politics where he had served as director since 1928. Franco had never been enthusiastic about constitutional monarchy, let alone republicanism, but he declined to participate in a failed military coup attempt in 1932. Though Franco kept at arm's length from politics, his burgeoning Catholic faith and increasing contempt for communism added a new aspect to his hitherto one-dimensional brand of military patriotism. In October 1934, Franco led national forces to Asturias to suppress a revolutionary miners' insurrection, an operation that established him as Spain's preeminent military figure.

Like many conservative Catholics and a small but growing number of followers of the fascistic Falange party, Franco was convinced the forces of international communism were bringing Spain to the brink of a revolution. Increasing rural unrest and urban street violence in early 1936 appeared to confirm this suspicion. A group of Spanish officers stationed in Morocco had begun conspiring to impose military order. Though Franco was reluctant to commit, he acted to secure support from Adolf Hitler, Mussolini, and the Falange in the event of an uprising. He courted such support less out of ideological affinity than because of his awareness that these groups would be most eager to support a military revolt against a democratic regime.

The military rebellion that began in Spanish Morocco on July 17, 1936, defined no clear ideological agenda beyond establishing a "Spanish and Catholic" national movement. By October 1, as the rebellion transformed into a full-fledged civil war, the rebel military leadership made Franco supreme leader of the rebel zone. Franco cultivated a Manichaean view of the conflict that appeared to justify the brutality of his army's methods and the growing sympathy for Hitler's New Order among his advisors. Following his victory in 1939, Franco converted the Falange into the National Movement, the single official party of the new, quasi-totalitarian state. Franco had hoped to exploit his alliance with Hitler's Germany to rehabilitate Spain and expand its colonial position in North Africa, but terms with Hitler could never be reached. As the tide of World War II

turned against Germany in 1942, Franco distanced his regime. He reduced the influence of the National Movement, gave succor to thousands of Jews fleeing German captors, and ended the brutal post-civil war repression in which at least 50,000 pro-republican prisoners were executed (possibly many more).

Franco was, along with António Salazar of Portugal, Europe's only noncommunist dictator to survive World War II. After 1945, he redefined his regime as a monarchy and an organic democracy, though no dynastic succession was specified nor were arrangements made for any real popular representation. Franco's Spain endured isolation through 1953 when the emerging international alignment of the Cold War made possible tighter alignment with the United States and the Western European nations. Although Franco would remain Caudillo (leader) until his death in 1975, his regime evolved into a kind of limited-pluralist authoritarianism tolerant of political debate as long as it did not question the regime's legitimacy. In 1969, Franco chose Don Juan Carlos de Borbón, the grandson of Alfonso XIII, as his successor.

Sasha D. Pack

See also [Authority](#); [Castro](#), [Fidel](#); [Conservatism](#); [Fascism](#); [Liberalism](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Totalitarianism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Frankfurt School

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Frankfurt School

The Frankfurt school is a term applied retrospectively in the 1960s to describe the group of thinkers associated with the Institute for Social Research founded in Frankfurt in 1923 and later moved to Geneva (1933), New York (1935), and Los Angeles (1941), before returning to Frankfurt (1953). Their approach came to be known as critical theory. Much controversy surrounds the term *Frankfurt school*. Some consider it misleading, as it implies an artificial coherence to their work, ignoring the divisions and disagreements among them. It also raises issues of how we can decide who should be considered members of the school and who not. While keeping these caveats in mind, however, we can begin to outline some of the main features that applied specifically to its first phase, from 1923 to 1933. The first is that it had an institutional structure derived from the Institute of Social Research. The second was the role of the philosopher, sociologist, and social psychologist Max Horkheimer as a pivotal figure for introducing and furthering the theoretical basis of the school's work and for acting as its coordinator. The third relates to having an original manifesto that was encapsulated in Horkheimer's 1931 inaugural lecture, *The Present State of Social Philosophy and the Tasks Facing an Institute of Social Research*. Fourth, critical theory created a new paradigm with which to understand and critique society, as the combination of philosophy, social science, and psychoanalysis was a distinctive aspect of the school throughout its history. The fifth and final feature was an academic outlet for the school's work, the *Journal of Social Research*.

Origins

Felix Weil, the son of a wealthy businessman, set up the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt in 1923. The institute was affiliated with the University of Frankfurt, but Weil's wealth ensured that it retained a large degree of autonomy in its operations. Between 1923 and 1929, the institute was directed by Carl Grünberg, who had been professor in law and political economy at the University of Vienna, and now became the first Marxist professor at a German university. He founded and edited the first publication of the institute, the *Archive for the History of Socialism and the Labour Movement*, also known as *Grünberg's Archive*, and he was instrumental in bringing together a number of committed scholars, notably the student of literature and popular culture Leo Lowenthal and the economist and national-planning specialist Friedrich Pollock. As Marxism was the guiding thread of the institute's activities and research, links were also established with the Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow, resulting in the joint publication of the first volume of the complete works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.

The Marxist framework within which the institute would operate was affirmed with Grünberg's inaugural address in 1924, which attacked the way German universities were educating students to think uncritically about the world and instead to act as conduits for the preservation of existing power relations. Marxism as a method of scientific research and a philosophical system was tasked to unmask this process by subjecting social life in all its formations to a thoroughgoing critique. To do so meant deciphering the underlying laws that govern society at any particular time and recognizing that the categories used to understand them are not universal truths but fluid conceptions that can be used to comprehend the dynamic and varying forms of economy and society. To some extent, therefore, Grünberg was implicitly criticizing the determinism of the Marxism of the Second International. This criticism of orthodox Marxism along with the use of Marx's political economy would become distinctive aspects of the school's development, emphasizing historically based empirical research. In emphasizing economic causality and in positing a natural progression for social institutions to actualize themselves, Grünberg sometimes slipped back into a form of determinism. Despite his vital role, it

was with the advent of Horkheimer's directorship in 1930 that the school came into its own.

Further Developments

Horkheimer helped give the Frankfurt school its distinctive identity by the introduction of new scholars to the institute, such as the psychoanalyst and social psychologist Erich Fromm; the philosopher and literary critic Walter Benjamin; the philosopher, sociologist, and musicologist Theodor Adorno; and the philosopher Herbert Marcuse. These are the key theorists of the first generation of the school. The second generation is exemplified by the philosopher and sociologist Jürgen Habermas and the philosopher and social theorist Axel Honneth, both of whom carried on the tradition of critical theory but took it in new directions.

Horkheimer's inaugural address, delivered in 1931, *The Present Situation of Social Philosophy and the Tasks of an Institute of Social Research*, attempted to offer an overriding framework within which the research of the school should be undertaken. While continuing to stress the connection of theory and practice, Horkheimer suggested a number of changes to what research the school should become concerned with. In particular, he attacked philosophy for remaining within the abstract realm of theory in its treatment of the individual's relation to society. For Horkheimer, philosophy in general was ahistorical and understood individuals as being abstract and isolated, as in the case of existentialism, or submerged in a hypothetical social totality, as in Hegelian idealism, rather than socially and historically rooted in the life and culture of the society and time they happen to live in. He argued instead for an interdisciplinary approach across the social sciences and the humanities that would dialectically unite theory with practice and reformulate philosophical problems in more precise and empirical ways. On the other hand, Horkheimer also critiqued orthodox Marxism for its overemphasis on economics. He suggested a more complex understanding of the interrelations of economy, society, and psychology. In short, it was necessary to explore all aspects of cultural life and their dynamic interactions.

Under the auspices of this research strategy, the institute developed a number of overriding concerns that had to be investigated for a more critical understanding of society in the hope of its transformation away from oppression and domination. These were developed between 1930 and 1944 against the backdrop of the development of fascism and Nazism, which raised the question of their widespread appeal among the masses and of why had there not been a more coherent response against them by the official labor movements of Europe. Linked to these questions was the need to investigate the general development of authoritarianism present, not just in fascism, but also in the administered world of capitalism with its increasingly bureaucratic institutions and its tendency to fall into crises. Culture had to be analyzed to assess whether it had become primarily a form of ideological manipulation and control. The institute subjected the family to a new critique as a nexus of these psychological, cultural, and political phenomena. Finally, Marxism was reevaluated across a number of themes, most notably regarding what groups could become the most likely agents of social change in light of the Soviet experience. Such broad areas of investigation gave some coherence to the school, despite different emphases by different thinkers. The most prominent theorists within the school, Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse, did touch on all these themes in some way in their work.

Exile

The enforced exile of the institute due to the rise of Nazism, and its relocation first to Geneva and then to the United States, had important implications for the school itself. The research strategy developed by Horkheimer was no longer appropriate to the situation the displaced members of the school now found themselves in, and planned projects had to be abandoned. In addition, Horkheimer's edict on the importance of uniting theory with practice was undermined by a split between works on social theory and philosophy and empirical studies. This split was particularly evident in the contrast between Horkheimer and Adorno's largely theoretical *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and the more empirically based research of the institute in Adorno and colleagues' *The Authoritarian Personality*, which investigated the roots of the psychological appeal of Nazism. Furthermore, the institute's research was being affected by the

academic culture of social science in the United States, which was dominated by uncritical empiricism, ahistoricism, and optimism. However, this difference also had the positive effect, especially for writers such as Adorno, of sharpening the critique of society and the methods with which to analyze it.

A particular challenge of working in the United States was the effect of the conservative political climate on the institute's funding, with threats of harassment and deportation leading the institute to tone down its publications in order to disguise their radical import.

Return

The institute's return to Germany in 1953 saw Horkheimer appointed as rector of the University of Frankfurt and Adorno as a professor before becoming a codirector in 1955. Fromm had left the institute in 1939, and Marcuse elected to remain in the United States. The institute also published a series of publications under the title *Frankfurt Contributions to Sociology* to replace the earlier *Journal for Social Research*. Horkheimer, up to his retirement in 1958 and death in 1973, and more importantly, Adorno, up to his death in 1969, were the main focus of the school's activities. Although the institute continued after their demise, it is generally thought that the school itself did not. However, the importance of the school was reflected in the work of Marcuse and the popularization of the name Frankfurt school during the radicalism of the 1960s and early 1970s. Finally, some have also seen the tradition of the school being carried on by Habermas, who had studied under Adorno and Horkheimer before taking over the latter's chair in 1964. Axel Honneth, who studied under Habermas, took over as director of the institute in 2001.

Main Theorists

As we have seen, Horkheimer was pivotal in giving the school its identity through his role as director and by outlining its overall research strategy. *Dialectic of Enlightenment* ([1944] 1972), which he wrote with Adorno, became the pivotal work of the Frankfurt school with its attack on the

culture industry and the instrumentalism prevalent in the administered world of capitalism and fascism. Horkheimer also highlighted the school's identity in his role as editor for works on anti-Semitism. However, he ultimately rejected his radical adherence to both Marxism and communism because of the tyranny that had occurred under Stalinism. He moved even further away from the radicalism of the school by supporting the Vietnam War and criticizing the student uprisings of the late 1960s.

Fromm is a relatively neglected and controversial figure in the history of the Frankfurt school but still an important one given his emphasis on psychoanalysis and his attempts to link the ideas of Sigmund Freud and Marx. A close friend of Horkheimer's, he was appointed to the institute in 1930 as director of its social psychology section and was tasked to do an empirical social-psychological study of the characteristics and attitudes of the German working class. This project involved distributing a questionnaire to over 3,000 workers, with 1,100 responding, and it was followed up with in-depth interviews. From the survey, Fromm discerned character types of people's personality ranging from authoritarian at one extreme to ambivalent in the middle and to radical revolutionary at the other extreme. He discovered that the German working class was more prone to the authoritarian end of the scale and hence susceptible to fascism, a finding that went against the assumptions of both the Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party. However, the institute decided not to publish Fromm's findings, perhaps, as Marcuse pointed out, because they could be seen as supporting the idea that the workers in Germany had always been fascist anyway. On a more positive note, however, the methodology of the study was utilized by Adorno, despite his hostility toward Fromm, and his associates in the school, for the character type portrayed in the highly influential and massive work *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950). Fromm did publish a major article in the *Journal for Social Research*, "The Method and Function of Social Psychology," that impressed Horkheimer and influenced the school to engage with Freudian analysis and its relation to Marxism. He was also a leading researcher in the institute's work on *Authority and the Family* (1936). However, it was his ultimate rejection of Freud's theory of the instincts in 1938 that led to a split with Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse and was the main cause of his departure from the school in 1939. Nevertheless, his contribution to the

psychoanalytic side of the school's work, linked to his humanistic interpretation of Marx, remains influential.

Walter Benjamin's contribution to the identity of the school, like Fromm's, is shrouded in controversy, as he had long-running disputes with other members, most notably Adorno. His primary contribution came in his sociocultural critique of the arts, broadly conceived, as exemplified in his essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." There he argued that aura gives the uniqueness and originality to a work of art and so cannot be preserved when the artwork is reproduced. Thereafter, Benjamin's concept of aura became increasingly important in the institute's analysis of culture. Similarly, his analysis of the crowd in mass society from "Certain Motifs in Baudelaire" shaped the institute's work.

In the wake of Benjamin's tragic death while fleeing the Nazis in 1940, his frequent critics Adorno and Horkheimer promoted his work and ensured his lasting legacy, which continues to the present. In fact, an initial mimeographed memorial volume included works by Benjamin, Horkheimer, and Adorno. When the institute returned to Frankfurt, Benjamin's and Adorno's friend Gershom Scholem helped ensure the publication and dissemination of Benjamin's works.

Along with Horkheimer, Adorno is seen as one of the pivotal figures of the Frankfurt school. He joined the institute in 1938 and as we have seen above was coauthor with Horkheimer of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, a key text of the school and was involved in the projects on authoritarianism. What Adorno also brought to the school was a body of work that very much defined what critical theory was about in relation to philosophy, music, and aesthetics right up until his death. His pivotal works were *Minima Moralia* (1951), *Negative Dialectics* (1966), and the posthumously published *Aesthetic Theory* (1970). *Minima* encapsulated a key aspect of the school's emphasis on human alienation, not simply in relation to production, but in every aspect of human existence in an increasingly administered world. *Negative Dialectics* referred to a process of reflexive questioning that undermines identity theorizing through nonidentity theorizing. Whereas identity theorizing attempts to subordinate particularity under universal concepts, nonidentity theorizing exposes the divergence between these

moments and thus their multiple potentials in a dynamic social world. *Aesthetic Theory* is now seen as a culmination of Adorno's understanding of art in its many forms and his hope for redemption through it. Some, however, view this phase of Adorno's work as a retreat into aesthetics from the fervor and turmoil of the student protests of the 1960s, denting not only his own reputation, but that of the school itself.

It then fell to Marcuse to restore and preserve a more positive impression of the school. Marcuse joined the institute in 1932 to finish his Habilitation, or second dissertation, on *Hegel's Ontology and the Foundation of a Theory of Historicity*. He published a number of articles in the *Journal for Social Research* between 1934 and 1938, covering issues such as the critique of liberalism and the totalitarian state, the development of the notion of essence, philosophical and cultural theory, and an examination of hedonism. Unlike Adorno and Horkheimer, he remained in the United States when they and the institute returned to Germany, but he was still seen as a major figure in the Frankfurt school right up until his death in 1979. One of his key contributions that captures the radicalism of the 1960s was his *One-Dimensional Man* (1964), which exposed how the postwar boom had integrated workers into the capitalist system and nullified their opposition to it through relative affluence and the ability to buy an endless procession of consumer goods. Marcuse instead looked to the student movement and the dispossessed as new agents for bringing about a new society free from domination and oppression.

Habermas is seen as being part of the school because he studied with Adorno and Horkheimer and took over the latter's chair. He is also seen as being pivotal in developing the critical theory tradition, particularly with his theory of communicative action. This arose out of his interest in reason and rationality, discourse ethics, and deliberative democracy. As his work has progressed, he has developed his thought across a wide-ranging number of areas from religion to issues in European politics. Whether in the present time he can still be seen as the bearer of the ethos of the Frankfurt school is open to debate, but his historic place in its history cannot be denied. Similarly, the institute, now under the directorship of Honneth, still engages in a critical theory approach but is generally not seen as a continuation of the Frankfurt school. Rather, it serves to preserve one of the school's

main tenets: the use of the interdisciplinary method to critique existing society. In that sense, and with the continued relevance of the pathbreaking work of its main theorists, the school's spirit lives on.

Ian Fraser

See also [Alienation](#); [Autonomy](#); [Civil Society](#); [Class](#); [Communism](#), [Varieties of](#); [Critical Theory](#); [Fascism](#); [Freud and Social Theory](#); [German Political Thought](#); [Habermas, Jürgen](#); [Hegelianism](#); [Ideology](#); [Marcuse, Herbert](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Methodology of Political Thought](#); [National Socialism](#); [Political Culture](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Stalin and Stalinism](#); [Totalitarianism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Larry Alexander Larry Alexander

Freedom of Expression

Freedom of expression

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Freedom of Expression

Freedom of expression is widely regarded as a basic human right. It has found legal expression in various written national, state, and provincial constitutions as well as in international human rights conventions. It was defended by John Milton in the seventeenth century and was constitutionalized as freedom of speech by the United States in 1791.

Despite its near universal acceptance as a basic human right, debates over its justification, scope, and weight abound. With respect to its justification, some regard it as an integral component of democratic governance and hence as justified to the extent democratic governance is justified. Others, most famously John Stuart Mill in *On Liberty* ([1859] 1956), give various consequentialist justifications: freedom of expression promotes the search for truth and thus social betterment, freedom of expression furthers autonomous thought and conduct, and suppression of freedom of expression is generally a sign of improper governmental purposes. Others give a deontological justification for freedom of expression as an inherent right, even if its use causes problems. Still others combine ontology with utility in arguing that government does not show proper respect for its citizens if it presumes they will be persuaded to act improperly merely because they hear certain messages.

Each of these justifications for freedom of expression is subject to criticism. Freedom of expression is believed to be a moral and international legal right even in regimes that are not democratic. Moreover, the scope of the

expression relevant to democratic decision making is indeterminate, potentially as narrow as speech specifically assessing candidates and programs or as broad as speech expressing any idea that might conceivably be politically relevant.

With respect to expressive freedom's contribution to the search for truth, there is no single truth but only various truths of varying degrees of importance and certainty, some of which will be disclosed by expressive freedom and others of which will be distorted or suppressed by it. Moreover, in specific domains in which ascertaining the truth is of paramount importance—for example, legal trials, scientific research—expression is highly regulated by rules of evidence, peer review, and the like.

With respect to promotion of autonomy, although expressive freedom does contribute to autonomy in one sense, it may also impede it through misleading people, inciting violence, disclosing confidential information, and in all sorts of other ways. Moreover, autonomy is promoted (and impeded) by all sorts of regulations that have nothing to do with expression so that with respect to promoting autonomy, there is nothing distinctive about expressive freedom.

Although suppression of expression may be an indication that government is acting improperly, there are many reasons for suppression, including the damage done by hate speech, that are also regarded as quite proper reasons for government to act upon in regulating behavior. And the deontological justification applies only to suppressions of expression on the ground that the expression's audience might act improperly, whereas most governmental reasons for suppression are not of this type. Moreover, even this justification seems too strong, as it would preclude government from forbidding solicitations of crime and publishing of information useful in committing them, such as how to build bombs, hack into computers, or get away with murder.

Laws considered possibly violative of the right of freedom of expression can be divided into those that penalize expressions because of the messages they convey—content-based laws—and those that incidentally affect expression but that are not aimed at messages. (A third category would be

acts of expression by the government itself, or governmental subsidies and encouragements of some messages not accompanied by suppression of opposing messages.) Message regulations can be in turn divided. For some message regulations, the government fears the audience will be persuaded to act improperly and desires to prohibit not only the audience's acts, but also the messages that potentially persuade. Examples are advocacy or solicitations of crime, publication of information useful for criminals, and speech that provokes but does not advocate crime. For other message regulations, the government fears a harm that will occur either upon mere receipt of the message or upon audience acts in response that cannot be controlled or penalized. Examples are laws protecting secrets, confidential communications, privacy, reputation, freedom from deception, freedom from threats, intellectual property, freedom from offense and emotional distress, and the morale of governmental workers.

Laws that incidentally affect expression include not merely laws regulating the time, place, and manner of expression—such as those against yelling fire in a crowded theater—but in reality all laws. For all laws affect, directly or indirectly, what gets said, by whom, to whom, and with what effect.

Beyond state actions affecting freedom of expression, the general social climate of tolerance or intolerance can have similar, or as Mill (1859) argues regarding public opinion, even stronger effects. The global controversy in recent decades over “political correctness and incorrectness,” all across the ideological spectrum, stems in large part from objections by those who feel that their freedom of expression is being unfairly denied, discouraged, or punished (Cummings 2001).

Finally, although one sometimes sees a distinction drawn between speech and symbolic speech, in reality all speech is symbolic. And no matter what symbols are employed—marks, sounds, pictures, dramatization, music, and so on—what is important is whether the government—and/or public opinion as shaped by government—is regulating the message or is instead regulating the medium for reasons that are not message-related.

Larry Alexander

See also [Autonomy](#); [Civil Society](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Law and Political Thought](#); [Liberalism](#); [Libertarianism](#); [Mill, John Stuart](#); [Rights, Civil](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Rule of Law](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Toleration](#)

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Peter Mayo Peter Mayo

Freire, Paulo

Freire, Paulo

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Freire, Paulo

Paulo Freire Reglus Neves (1921–97) has achieved iconic status among educators and a whole range of cultural workers. Born in Recife (Pernambuco, N-E Brazil), Freire dedicated the best part of his life to combating social injustices. He suffered imprisonment and exile for his efforts in planning what was perceived as being a subversive approach to literacy in Brazil in the early 1960s. He moved briefly to Bolivia and then to Chile, where he was engaged in an educational program connected with the agrarian reform, and later to the United States, where his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* ([1970a] 1993) was published in English translation. He eventually went to Geneva, where he worked for the World Council of Churches. He was frequently called upon by revolutionary governments, such as those in Guinea-Bissau and Nicaragua, to assist them in developing and evaluating educational projects. He also used his sixteen-year exile to work with different groups in Europe. Following his return to Brazil, he engaged in municipal educational administration in São Paulo. Many of his works were translated into English and other languages.

Freire's celebrated *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is considered exemplary in its reflections on the various contexts with which he was engaged. In this work, Freire provides rich theoretical formulations and insights from a variety of sources. His work emphasizes the political nature of education: education is politics. For Freire, education cannot be neutral; it can either domesticate or liberate. A liberating education enables learners to engage in a dialectical and empowering relationship with knowledge and society.

A top-down prescriptive process of teacher-student transmission constitutes a domesticating, banking education. Freire advocates an interactive, authentically dialogical approach to knowledge. Although not on an equal footing, teacher and learner learn from each other as they dialectically co-investigate the object of knowledge. The concept involved is praxis, which is central to Freire's educational philosophy. Learners and educators obtain critical distance from the world they know in order to perceive it in a critical light. The community is researched beforehand by a team of educators and project participants through informal meetings with community members and close observation of their speech patterns, ensuring knowledge of the community members' concerns. The insights derived from this research are codified into learning materials to enable learners from the same community to collectively unveil the underlying contradictions of their society.

Freire emphasizes the pedagogy of the question. Knowledge is problematized in a problem-posing rather than a problem-solving approach. Knowledge is, therefore, not something possessed by educators that they transfer to the learner but is explored collectively, culminating in dynamic, created knowledge. The approach is directive, actually codirective, since learning is conceived of as a political act involving both the discovery and the creation of knowledge by students and teachers working together. This partnership must not degenerate into either teacher authoritarianism or student anarchy. The teacher's knowledge and pedagogical expertise should win the students' respect and provide an inspirational platform for their exploration. Only through dialogue does the group learn collectively to unveil personal and societal contradictions. Adult educators are to show tact when promoting dialogical relations. They often alternate dialogue with instruction; people exposed for years to banking education do not engage in dialogue easily. The starting point is the learner's existential reality, which becomes the starting point, not the be-all and end-all of the learning process, lest the quest for authentic knowledge lapse into populism. Educators must have enough humility to relearn, through their dialogic interactions with the learners, what they think they already know.

Freire conceived of the educators and learners as "integral human beings" (Darder 2002, 94) in an educational process based on love and thus

humanizing the relationship between teacher and taught (teacher-student and student-teacher, in Freire's terms). This education process also drives the educator forward in teaching and working for the dismantling of dehumanizing societal structures of all kinds. The entire pedagogical process practiced and articulated by Freire is based on his trust in human beings' ability to create "a world in which it will be easier to love" (Freire [1970a] 1993, 40; see Allman 1998, 9). His concept of love has strong Christian overtones as well as revolutionary ones.

Freire's robust, international influence has extended to such diverse areas as the philosophy and sociology of education, theology, anthropology, communications, theater studies, and health studies. He has influenced teachers, social workers, and social-movement activists such as those working in the Movement of Landless Peasants in Brazil.

Peter Mayo

See also [Civil Society](#); [Class](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Empire and Political Thought](#); [Equality and Egalitarianism](#); [Liberalism](#); [Radicalism](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Graeme Garrard Graeme Garrard

French Enlightenment

French enlightenment

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French Enlightenment

The Enlightenment was a broad, diffuse movement of reform that swept across the Western world in the eighteenth century. Although it was very much an international phenomenon, it varied in tone and emphasis in different national contexts. In France, the Enlightenment encompassed a somewhat broader range of opinions than in most countries, a breadth that made it particularly diverse and fractious. It was led by a small band of (mostly) Paris-based writers such as Charles-Louis Montesquieu, Francois-Marie Arouet Voltaire, Denis Diderot, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Jean d'Alembert, the Comte de Buffon, Claude Adrien Helvétius, the Baron d'Holbach, Étienne Bonnot de Condillac, and the Marquis de Condorcet, known collectively as the *philosophes*, a French word that means both a philosopher in the narrow sense and a thinker or intellectual more broadly. Most of the leading proponents of the Enlightenment in France were philosophes in the latter sense. Beneath this high Enlightenment of intellectuals was a broad spectrum of literate individuals who both were affected by Enlightenment ideas and influenced its character, including many people who met regularly, shared knowledge, and debated ideas in an informal public sphere of salons, coffeehouses, and lodges across France, particularly in the second half of the eighteenth century. Some of those who belonged to the so-called low Enlightenment popularized the ideas of the philosophes for an even wider audience and engaged in lively polemics in the Grub Street world of hack writers and disreputable publishers. All were united by a common faith in science and reason as the best means gradually

to improve the condition of humanity and promote progress, although there were sharp disagreements among them over specific questions such as the nature and existence of God and the ideal form of government by which to advance the cause of popular enlightenment.

Around the middle of the eighteenth century, an influential group of writers in France formed themselves into a loose society of men of letters with broadly shared values, tastes, and beliefs. It was not until then that the philosophes in France actually started to think of themselves as an informal party—the party of humanity—devoted to the promotion of enlightenment and progress. From about this time, they came to regard themselves as the self-appointed leaders of an unofficial opposition to the religious, political, and philosophical establishment in ancien régime France with a mission to legislate for the rest of the nation in matters of philosophy and taste. Their preferred habitat was the salon, the most prominent of which in Paris after 1750 was that of the atheist Baron d’Holbach (1723–89), whose biweekly dinners at his large home in the center of the city earned him the title of maître d’Hotel de la Philosophie. The salon of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse (1732–76)—the muse of the *Encyclopédie*—was also popular with leading philosophes, regularly attracting luminaries such as d’Alembert, Chastellux, Marmontel, Turgot, Morellet, Saint-Lambert, La Harpe, Suard, abbé Arnaud, Malesherbes, Diderot, Grimm, Condillac, Duclos, Raynal, Damilaville, and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. This salon served as a kind of unofficial headquarters of the French Enlightenment, whereas d’Holbach’s salon in the rue Royale tended to be popular with the more radical philosophes.

The supporters of the Enlightenment in France were committed to the emancipatory project of liberating the mind and power of human beings from what they saw as the fetters of prejudice, intolerance, and tradition so that the individual would be capable of free and independent action. Negatively, this required tearing down the many obstacles to a clear and accurate perception of reality, such as superstition and dogma. The greatest of these obstacles, they thought, was the church, the Enlightenment’s principal target in France. While the Pope himself had little more direct influence in France than he did in many Protestant countries, the eighteenth-century Catholic Church in France continued to enjoy much of

the power and many of the privileges that it had traditionally held: the Crown was still officially based on a divine right theory of monarchy; the church continued to collect tithes and enjoyed special exemption from taxes, despite its enormous wealth; it exercised responsibility for much civil policy (in education, for example); and the eighteenth-century French state enforced, in a very sporadic and inconsistent manner, outward religious conformity through an imperfect regime of censorship, the regulation of public worship, and criminal prosecution. This forced conformity was particularly the case after the assassination attempt on Louis XV in 1757, which fueled the establishment's growing fear and intolerance of radical ideas. A law was then passed in France sanctioning the death penalty for writers and publishers convicted of attacking religion or the state, although it was seldom enforced. In 1759, the *Encyclopédie* was officially suppressed, and the Pope placed it on the Index of Forbidden Books. Prominent philosophes such as Voltaire (1694–1778) and Diderot (1713–84) had been incarcerated for their irreverent opinions, and Helvétius (1715–71) and La Mettrie (1709–51) narrowly escaped the same fate by fleeing into exile, as did the abbé Raynal (1713–96). As a result of this continuing ecclesiastical wealth, power, and persecution, the Enlightenment in France had a markedly anticlerical cast not typically found among the *Aufklärer* in Germany or their kindred spirits in Britain or the United States.

Virtually all of the philosophes were strongly averse to religious dogmatism and clerical authority, and most vigorously criticized established religious institutions and beliefs in favor of a minimalistic and universal natural religion. Voltaire fought against religious persecution in France in *causes célèbres* such as those of Jean Calas (1698–1762) and Jean-François de la Barre (1745–66), who were convicted on trumped up charges, tortured, and executed primarily for being Protestants in a Catholic country. This persecution enraged Voltaire, who campaigned to “écrasez l’infâme” (to crush the infamous thing—the established church).

Although the philosophes have commonly been portrayed as atheists, most were actually deists who believed in the existence of a necessary, eternal, supreme, and intelligent being that was no matter of faith, but of reason, as Voltaire explained it. While there were certainly atheists among the philosophes, most notably La Mettrie, d’Holbach, Helvétius, and

(eventually) Diderot, the vast majority affirmed a belief in a remote deity that did not intervene directly in human affairs. Most believed that the universe was governed by natural laws established by God, and many attacked atheism as both untrue and morally dangerous. Hence Voltaire's declaration, "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him."

The scientific method of Francis Bacon (1561–1626) and Isaac Newton (1642–1727) was taken by the Enlightenment's proponents in eighteenth-century France as the model for the systematic and reliable acquisition of knowledge, in contrast to the obscurity of traditional metaphysics and orthodox religious beliefs, which science had disproved or displaced in the eyes of many. Faith in natural science as the best means for improving human well-being was very widespread, if not universal, during the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. Most of the philosophes believed that universal reason ought to replace arbitrary and irrational beliefs, and those aspects of moral, social, and political life that had previously been accepted unquestioningly should be subject to chronic revision and scrutiny in light of their practical usefulness and new information made available through scientific investigation and discovery. Science, reason, and liberty alone can cure men and make them happier, according to the Baron d'Holbach. Traditional beliefs and prejudices that failed to meet this critical standard ought to be discarded without sentimentality. In the words of Diderot, writing in the *Encyclopédie*, "Everything must be examined, everything must be investigated, without hesitation or exception."

The *Encyclopédie* that Diderot coedited with the French mathematician Jean d'Alembert (1717–83) embodied this outlook perhaps better than any other work of the age and was intended to be a *machine de guerre* of the Enlightenment. It was a hugely ambitious compendium of knowledge published between 1751 and 1772, comprising twenty-eight large volumes, with 71,818 articles and 3,129 illustrations, including contributions by most of the leading philosophes of the day such as Voltaire, Rousseau, Montesquieu (1689–1755), Turgot (1727–81), and d'Holbach. This controversial and influential project was deliberately subversive of many traditional religious and political beliefs, which eventually led its official suppression in France.

Almost all of the philosophes were empiricists, believing that the human mind is a blank slate that acquires knowledge by means of sensory impressions. This view went against the orthodox Christian belief in innate ideas (of God, for example) and original sin, which was still a key article of Christian faith in eighteenth-century France. Enlightenment epistemology was therefore strongly at odds with traditional Catholic teaching about human nature.

On the nature and power of reason the differences between the mainstream Enlightenment view and that of the church was less stark, even if many theologians and clerics thought otherwise. It was commonly thought, particularly by critics of the Enlightenment, that the philosophes had a naïve faith in the power of human reason to guide human affairs. It is undoubtedly true that they valued reason highly. For example, in his *Preliminary Discourse to the Encyclopedia of Diderot*, published in 1751 (1963), d'Alembert outlines a naturalistic and secular method for organizing the vast amount of knowledge that the *Encyclopédie* had assembled, which he divided into three broad categories: history, philosophy, and fine arts, corresponding to the faculties of memory, reason, and imagination in the human mind. He gave pride of place to reason, since it is “in conformity with the natural progress of the operations of the mind.” Although d'Alembert concedes that, once imagination has made its first steps, it moves much faster than reason, which frequently exhausts itself in fruitless investigations. He depicts reason as the glory of the human mind and describes philosophy as the dominant taste of our century. The *Preliminary Discourse* also pays lavish tribute to important innovators such as René Descartes (1596–1650), Newton, Bacon, and John Locke (1632–1704) in the progressive search for a new methodology for acquiring knowledge that he hopes will give mankind the power to independently shape and direct its own destiny.

However, the Catholic Church was far from repudiating reason as such. Instead, it typically defined reason in a way that was consistent with the Christian beliefs that the philosophes rejected. Also, most philosophes had a keen appreciation of the power of the passions and many, such as Diderot, welcomed the liberation of our passionate natures from the constraints imposed on them by orthodox Christian doctrines that traditionally pitted

the sins of the flesh against the purity of the spirit. In other words, the debate between the proponents of the Enlightenment in France and the church tended to be more about the nature of reason and less about whether reason was a good or bad thing per se.

An intense interest in secular history was common among the philosophes, for a variety of reasons. Some wished to provide an alternative account of the past to rival that of the Biblical account and standard church-sanctioned histories, stressing the latter's distortions of the truth, wicked consequences, or irrelevance, as they saw it. For example, Voltaire wrote popular histories such as *Siècle de Louis XIV (The Age of Louis, 1751)* in which the church plays either a villainous or at best, marginal role in human affairs. His *Encyclopédie* article "Histoire" calls for precision, accuracy, and breadth in the study of history and criticizes the traditional historical focus on kings, wars, and religion. In one of the most widely read works of the French Enlightenment, the epic, massive thirty-six-volume *Histoire naturelle* (1749–88), the Comte de Buffon (1707–88) provided a naturalistic history of the world that all but ignores the Bible. This work led the Faculty of Theology at the Sorbonne to condemn the work, which its author retracted (although he carried on writing his magnum opus regardless).

Although the philosophes have often been mocked for what many see as their naïve optimism, this criticism is based on a misconception of the mainstream Enlightenment view of progress in eighteenth-century France. The Marquis de Condorcet's (1743–94) *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain (Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind, 1795)*, written just before he died in prison awaiting execution, probably comes the closest to this stereotypical view of the Enlightenment. It will vary in speed, he conceded, but progress "will never be reversed as long as the earth occupies its present place in the system of the universe." However, this work is highly unrepresentative of the philosophes, who tended to be much more skeptical about progress than Condorcet. Voltaire, who was in many ways the quintessential figure of the French Enlightenment, parodied naïve optimism in his mordant tragic-comedy *Candide* (1759), and he wrote to Diderot, "Our age is still quite barbaric." All of the philosophes agreed that progress is at least possible; most thought that it was probable; virtually no one (apart from Condorcet)

believed that it was inevitable. They had a keen appreciation of the many obstacles that stood on the path to progress, above all the church, although few seriously doubted that progress had been made and that the general trajectory of historical development was likely to continue gradually to improve.

One reason for this general—if very cautious and heavily qualified—optimism was the philosophes' rejection of the Christian belief in original sin in favor of a belief in natural human goodness. Not only did most affirm that human beings are untainted by an indelible corruption but given the empiricism of the French Enlightenment, they saw human nature as malleable and therefore, potentially infinitely improvable or perfectible.

There was little consensus among the Enlightenment's proponents in France on the best political means for attaining the common ends they shared. Their views on the best way to promote human well-being covered a broad spectrum, ranging from enlightened despotism to moderate constitutional government and popular democracy, although there were very few who advocated the latter. Voltaire and d'Alembert spoke for many in defending enlightened absolutism as the most effective way to elevate the masses and promote human progress. Voltaire was often contemptuous of *la canaille* (the rabble), as he often called them, believing that progress would stand little chance if left to their whims and preferences. Better to entrust power to enlightened, improving monarchs such as Frederick II of Prussia (1712–86). The democrat Rousseau (1712–78), a bitter rival and critic of Voltaire, disagreed sharply with him on this point, putting his faith in the simple virtue of ordinary people in his book *Du contrat social* (*The Social Contract*, 1762), which was unpopular with most of his fellow philosophes, few of whom were much perturbed when it was banned in Paris and Geneva and placed on the Vatican's Index of Forbidden Books for its subversive defense of the sovereignty of the general will. However, it was both widely read and enormously influential among the later generation of radicals who dominated politics during the French Revolution. For example, Maximilien Robespierre (1758–94) was inspired by Rousseau's case for republicanism and popular sovereignty, a form of which he sought to impose on France (with disastrous results) despite Rousseau's clear assertion in *The Social Contract* that it only applied to small city-states. The only place that the

Genevan thought his political principles had some chance of working in modern Europe was on the island of Corsica, a claim that Robespierre either overlooked or chose to disregard.

Condorcet, who was one of the only philosophes to live until the French Revolution, took a position that was much closer to that of the mainstream Enlightenment when he became a supporter of the moderate Girondist faction of revolutionaries in the Convention. He was arrested by the Jacobins and imprisoned, where he died in 1794. It is doubtful that many of the philosophes would have gone even as far as Condorcet had they lived long enough to see the Revolution, although we will never know. Even Rousseau, who inspired the Jacobins, claimed to have a great aversion to revolutions.

The Enlightenment was tainted by the violent excesses of the French Revolution, which many counterrevolutionary writers such as Joseph de Maistre (1753–1821) and Augustin Barruel (1741–1820) attacked for causing the breakdown of the social and political order that led to the events of the 1790s in France. Barruel's best-selling and enormously influential book *Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism* (original title *Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire du Jacobinisme*), which was published in 1797, blamed the Revolution on a conspiracy of philosophes and on German (mostly Bavarian) Illuminati who deliberately plotted to overthrow the ancien régime. The values and consequences of the French Enlightenment have never ceased since to provoke vigorous debate and controversy, with admirers and detractors on all points of the ideological compass, who continue to argue over its legacy.

Graeme Garrard

See also [Condorcet](#); [Contract Theory](#); [Diderot, Denis](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [English Enlightenment](#); [French Political Thought](#); [French Revolution](#); [Political Thought of the](#); [German Enlightenment](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Maistre, Joseph de](#); [Montesquieu, Baron de](#); [Progress](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Revolution](#); [Rousseau, Jean-Jacques](#); [Scottish Enlightenment](#); [Utopianism](#); [Voltaire](#); [Francois-Marie Arouet](#)

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French Political Thought

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French Political Thought

Many French political thinkers, from François-Marie Arouet Voltaire to Michel Foucault, have had a profound effect on intellectual life and political events in much of the world. Their ideas, however, were shaped in part by the French cultural environment in which they were developed, and their most profound influence has been felt in France. Accordingly, French political thought is defined here as the contributions of philosophers, essayists, and political figures to the debate and conflicts that have shaped French society. The account of French political thought given here is centered on events and circumstances that have altered the course of French history or that are deemed to portend further transformations of French society. These include, first and foremost, the French Revolution of 1789 and its aftermath, the establishment of the Third Republic in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the traumatic defeat of 1940, the Vichy regime (1940–44) followed by the Liberation of 1944–47, the colonial wars in Indochina and Algeria in the 1950s, the events of May 1968, European unification, and in more recent times, globalization—French public opinion and the French intellectual elites have reacted to globalization with a degree of pessimism and distrust that is arguably unique in the Western world.

The Long Shadow of the French Revolution

The French Revolution, which began in July 1789, marked the culmination of the intellectual ferment of the preceding three or four decades known as

the Enlightenment. But the political upheavals of the 1790s also brought about divergent interpretations of these ideas. These antagonistic doctrines continue to resonate in French political debates to this day.

The *encyclopédistes*, which is to say the authors of the various entries in the famous encyclopedia edited by the philosopher Denis Diderot and Jean d’Alembert, represented the main current of the French Enlightenment. They advocated using reason—the power of human understanding unsullied by religious dogmas—to make sense of natural phenomena and social situations; they viewed it as the only road to truth. They also proclaimed the existence of inviolable natural rights held in common by all men. Whether the generic term *hommes* (men) was really meant to include women, as it is still common usage in the French language or whether, in fact, it implicitly meant males only, was a contested subject; the Marquis de Condorcet and the early feminist Olympe de Gouges contended that women should be granted all the rights of citizenship, but they stood mostly alone on that point.

While the major figures of the French Enlightenment wished for social and political reforms, they were more confident in the power wisdom of enlightened despots such Frederick II of Prussia, whom Voltaire visited, than in the capacity of democracies to implement them. However, as a result of the American Revolution, in the years immediately preceding 1789, a number of younger writers and liberal aristocrats, such as the Marquis de Lafayette, Condorcet, the Abbé Sieyès, began to advocate an end to absolutism. Their hopes were fulfilled with the adoption of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen* (in August 1789) that then became the preamble of the Constitution of 1791.

The Declaration embodied distinctly liberal principles, rooted in natural law theory, such as protection against arbitrary arrest, and guarantees for the freedom of religion, freedom of expression, as well as the recognition that property rights are inviolable and sacred, suggesting that its drafters were familiar with the ideas of John Locke. But to interpret the Constitution of 1791, it is necessary to revisit the writings of the Baron de Montesquieu.

Montesquieu’s somewhat disjointed political theory (contained in his famous *The Spirit of Laws*) resists simplification, but the need to check

power with power stands out as one of its dominant themes. In a narrow sense, this principle led to constitutional rules that create separate domains for the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. Even before the French Constitution of 1791, the American Founding Fathers, who professed admiration for Montesquieu, had entrenched the separation of powers into their 1781 constitution. Since then, that principle has been adopted in varying degrees by all liberal democracies. In a broader sense, Montesquieu defended the ideal of a pluralistic civil society in which there exist many sources of countervailing social, cultural, and political power capable of keeping the central government in check. This vision has inspired many French political thinkers from Alexis de Tocqueville to the early twentieth-century philosopher Emile Chartier Alain, as well as by socialists such as Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and contemporary ecologists. Significant as this tradition is within French political thought, it never became the prevalent one. This lack is perhaps one of the clearest differences between French political thought and Anglo-American political thought; the latter has always been more favorably disposed toward decentralization and pluralism.

The classical liberal principles, albeit mixed with values inherited from neo-Roman republicanism, such as a belief in the rule of law, that guided the early stages of the Revolution were soon to be challenged by a radically different interpretation of republicanism, political rights, and the role of the state. That alternative vision found its expression in the speeches of the revolutionary leaders Maximilien Robespierre and Louis Antoine de Saint-Just and the actions of their followers. Notwithstanding original touches added by these leaders—most notably the idea that a republic could be established in a large nation and not just in a city-state like Rousseau's Geneva—their doctrines were largely derivative. They looked for inspiration in Rousseau's works, which is not to say that they were entirely true to the spirit of their master's vision.

Rousseau's political theory was developed in reaction to the French Enlightenment. It can be described as a two-step process. First, in his two discourses, Rousseau attacked the Enlightenment faith in reason, science, and progress, including what we would today call economic growth that French political economists known as the Physiocrats (to whom we owe the

phrase *laissez-faire*) sought to promote by encouraging the removal of trade barriers. Then follows a second step that was the subject of his celebrated *Of the Social Contract* (1762): by renouncing all their previous rights and forming a new political community on the ruins of the existing order, the citizens of an ideal state would collectively exercise political sovereignty. Their authentic desire to achieve the common good would constitute the general will. Laws that give expression to the general will are legitimate and must be obeyed by all. Statesmen in this ideal state must exercise great care to prevent the formation of what today we would call special interest groups, for the sum total of these narrow interests cannot be regarded as the indivisible general will of a virtuous sovereign people.

Robespierre and his allies, many of whom belonged to the Club des Jacobins, hence the name that is still attached to them, were convinced that they represented the general will of the French nation. This legitimized their short Reign of Terror (1792–94), a term that they themselves used to describe the repressive methods they deployed against all those who in their eyes failed to live up to the standards of virtuous citizenship. The *Terreur* ended with the fall of Robespierre in 1794, but the Jacobin spirit of 1793 lived on. In the late nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century, Jacobinism was recast in a more reformist and democratic mold. Its central tenets are (a) a centralizing perspective that places great stress on the role of the state in guiding the nation in many areas of public life, from education to economic development; (b) a distrust of organized interests, especially business lobbies, but also of religious ones—neo-Jacobins tend to interpret the separation of church and state as meaning that the state must promote not only religious neutrality but the absence of religious referents (e.g., the word God) in public discourse and political institutions (this is known as the doctrine of *laïcité*, a term that is untranslatable in English); and (c) a preference for the term *equality* in the motto of the French Republic “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.” In modern France, left-of-center neo-Jacobins (e.g., the dominant current within the French Socialist Party) and right-of-center neo-Jacobins (e.g., the Gaullists, who claim to follow in the political footsteps of General Charles de Gaulle, the first president of the French Fifth Republic, established in 1958) continue to hold these ideas. For example, Rousseau’s condemnation of luxury and commercial mores has given way to an acceptance of economic growth but continues to be

expressed in the form of distrust for market economics that cuts across ideological differences on other issues.

The revolutionary era went through more episodes before Napoleon Bonaparte declared himself Emperor in 1804, but for our purpose here they are not as significant, except to note that they occurred in a climate of political uncertainty that was in part caused by rather disastrous constitutional designs, at least one of which bear the marks of Seyès's preference for complex systems of representation that showed some theoretical merits but proved to be unworkable. (The French tendency to approach constitutional design as an abstract project informed by reason alone has been denounced by a long line of critics in the Anglo-American world, from Edmund Burke to F. A. Hayek.) What matters here is that the Revolution as a whole, but especially the two watersheds of 1789 and 1793, gave rise to three ideological families—a term meant to convey that each one of them includes many tendencies.

Revolutionary Utopianism

Revolutionary utopianism did not disappear from the French political scene with the demise of the Jacobins, nor did it remain synonymous with a radical interpretation of Rousseau's political theory. It evolved toward socialism. At first, French socialists such as Auguste Blanqui advanced their own revolutionary doctrines, but toward the end of the nineteenth century, many of them veered toward Marx's historical materialism and aimed for the dictatorship of the proletariat. After the Russian Revolution of 1917, that current found its home in the French Communist Party, which played a crucial role throughout much of the twentieth century. But other currents continued to challenge the communists and the legacy of at least some of them still lives on.

Proudhon promoted the idea of a peaceful transition to a society organized around workers-managed cooperatives federated into larger units all the way up to national democratic institutions that would deal with questions that could not possibly be handled at a local level. Proudhonism never developed into a powerful political movement, but since 1968 there has been a renewal of interest in self-management and the notion of a solidary

economy that would be neither capitalist nor centrally planned. Besides Proudhon, humanistic socialism's other great apostle was Jean Jaurès who pleaded for a reconciliation of the social classes through the design of appropriate institutions.

A far more violent tendency is associated with Georges Sorel who in his *Reflections on Violence* (1908) advocated constant agitation and an anarchistic conception of the aims of the workers' struggle. Sorel's influence on the French trade unions movement was rather short lived and in fact was more a legitimization of a brief episode of violent protest in the history of that movement than its cause. But his mystique of violence led a few socialist leaders in the direction of fascism during the 1930s, and some went on to support the Vichy regime after 1940. Today's antiglobalization anarchistic groups also evoke Sorel's ideas.

The French Communist Party emerged from World War II with an immense prestige because of its active participation in the French Resistance. It was briefly included in a provisional government (1944–47) that preceded the creation of the Fourth Republic but never regained power after that time. However, its influence and consequently, that of orthodox Marxism on the French cultural scene from 1945 to 1968 cannot be underestimated. Marxism made deep inroads in the disciplines of history (e.g., Georges Lefebvre, Albert Soboul) and philosophy (e.g., Louis Althusser). But the iconic example of the left-wing intellectuals' fascination with Marxism was Jean-Paul Sartre. Although the philosophy of existentialism that Sartre developed in the 1930s and early 1940s was essentially individualistic and relativistic, after 1945 he articulated a synthesis of existentialism and historical materialism. The focal point of this synthesis became the *intellectuel engagé* who freely chooses to devote his or her life to the cause of the proletarian revolution. In his often inflammatory speeches and his controversial political alliances, notably with Stalinists in the French Communist Party, Sartre attempted to become the very model of this concept.

The student rebellion (and the accompanying general strike) in May 1968 bears witness to the survival of this revolutionary tradition (the symbolic meaning of the street barricades erected by the students, replicating the

imagery of the 1848 revolution, was not lost on anyone). But the meaning and effects of these events are complex. On the one hand, they briefly occasioned a burst of radical Marxism that attempted to bypass the French Communist Party on its extreme left. On the other hand, the underlying ideology of 1968 was individualistic and relativistic. It brought about the eventual downfall of orthodox Marxism in France and the rise of postmodernism, which is associated with philosophers such as Foucault, Jean-François Lyotard, Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, Julie Kristeva, among others. They insisted that besides the class struggle there are equally important arenas of conflict centered on gender inequality, multiculturalism, ecological sustainability, and so on. In brief, there is no totalizing perspective that explains everything. And Foucault popularized the idea that power is dispersed and that multiple forms of resistance to the prevailing dogmas can spontaneously emerge (e.g., among women, the gay community, ecologists, etc.). French feminists, building on Simone de Beauvoir's pioneering works in the postwar years, turned to psychoanalysis in their contributions to third wave feminism. All these departures spelled the end of the messianic vision of a socialist endpoint.

Reactionary Countercurrents

At the opposite end of the political spectrum, the excesses of the French Revolution gave rise to a reactionary conservative movement. Its early defenders were the philosophers Joseph de Maistre and Auguste de Bonald who were acerbic critics of Rousseau and argued the case for a theocratic monarchy, on the model of the pre-1789 ancien régime. The reactionary faction became more diversified toward the end of the nineteenth century, although monarchists influenced by the writer Charles Maurras survived well into the twentieth century.

For much of the period extending from the 1890s to the present, the cause of nationalism was reclaimed by the extreme right. Initially, nationalism had been a progressive cause espoused by revolutionaries such as Georges Danton and the armies of the First Republic who attempted to propagate the ideal of republican self-government by unsettling feudal regimes throughout Europe. Thus, nationalism was conceived as devotion to the cause of not only transforming the kingdom of France into a nation of free

and equal citizens but also leading all European principalities and monarchies onto the same path. (Paradoxically, this stratagem provoked the birth of an ethnically based nationalism in the still not unified German principalities in particular; read in this respect Johann Gottlieb Fichte's *Address to the German Nation* [1808]) However, the civic nationalism of Danton was recast into the defense of the identity of an ethno-cultural nation defined by language, history and even, more ominously, blood lineage. Democracy, in the shape of the intense party politics that plagued the Third Republic, was perceived by many advocates of this brand of nationalism as a source of pernicious divisions that weakened the nation. Two events served as catalysts for this transformation: the loss of Alsace and part of the province of Lorraine to the Germans in 1870 and the Dreyfus affair that became a focus point for a latent anti-Semitism if not in French culture in general, at least among reactionary Catholic circles. The talented and passionate writer Maurice Barrès became the voice of antidemocratic and overtly anti-Semitic nationalism, although toward the end of his life he stepped back from the anti-Semitism of his youth.

With the collapse of the Third Republic in 1940 and the rise to power of Marshall Pétain at the helm of the Vichy regime (after the name of the capital of the so-called nonoccupied zone over which Pétain ruled), many of these right-wing nationalists and monarchists saw an opportunity to rebuild France on the model of an agrarian Catholic nation. Collaboration with the occupying Nazi forces was not their main goal, and they ended up being pushed aside by more avowedly fascist and even more rabidly anti-Semitic ideologues, some of whom were former socialists, who did actively promote collaboration with the occupier (e.g., Pétain's premier, Pierre Laval). Tragically, some of the best writers and journalists of that generation (e.g., Louis Ferdinand Céline, Robert Brasillach) were among them.

The defeat of Nazi Germany and the modernization of France initiated by the Liberation government headed by de Gaulle (himself a rather conservative, albeit not antidemocratic, nationalist) dealt a serious blow to this ideological family. However, in recent years the perceived threats to the integrity of the French nation posed by the combined effects of the presence of a large numbers of Muslim immigrants (most of whom are French

citizens by law) and of economic globalization have revived this current. So far, however, and contrary to the pre-1940 era, it has been rejected by the intellectual and artistic communities, and most of the media, with the notable exception of the philosopher Alain de Benoist who defend the idea that civilizations are inherently unequal.

Liberalism and Its Republican Avatars

Sandwiched between the revolutionary left and the reactionary right, the liberal family has had a difficult existence throughout French modern history, even though it counts some of the most brilliant defenders of liberal principles and values. As a consequence of this uncomfortable position, some of its adherents have at times made opportunistic compromises with parties or ideologies on their right or their left that diluted the liberal identity.

Never in his writings but very often in his political career, Benjamin Constant is a prime example of this dilemma. He was an ardent republican, then he briefly supported Napoleon when the latter reluctantly promised in 1815 to put in place a parliamentary regime; finally, he served as a member of the lower chamber of parliament of the constitutional monarchy established after the fall of the Napoleonic regime. These political contortions should not hide the fact that he remained true to his belief in the value of the principles enounced in the 1789 Declaration and in the virtues of representative government, within a constitutional framework that set limits to the powers of each branches of government, and of the state as a whole. He was equally opposed to the Rousseauian conception of radical democracy (which he denounced as nostalgia for the ancient Greek democracies whose citizens enjoyed the collective freedom of belonging to self-governing cities but enjoyed no individual liberties) and to the authoritarian absolutism of the reactionary monarchists. The zenith of classical liberalism in France occurred between 1830 and 1870 when, with the exception of the authoritarian phase of Napoleon III's reign in the 1850s, the political scene matched their ideal of constitutional representative government and when, in particular, their libertarian views on economic freedom were taken seriously, albeit not always strictly applied. Their organ was the influential *Journal des économistes* in which

political economists such as Frédéric Bastiat and Gustave de Molinari defended strict laissez-faire, free trade, and limited government. And on the more strictly political side of things, Tocqueville brilliantly dissected the differences between radical egalitarianism in French democratic thought and the more re-trained conduct of politics in America. Self-proclaimed liberals never regained that degree of prestige and influence after the fall of the Second Empire whose second constitution, proclaimed in 1869, they had enthusiastically endorsed because it instituted a British-style constitutional parliamentary monarchy in which they formed the first government under Émile Ollivier. From then on the tenets of the liberal doctrine (freedom of expression, limited government, respect for private property, etc.) could only be defended under the umbrella of centrist or moderate republicanism. Some important neo-Kantian political philosophers, Charles Renouvier in particular, explicitly attempted to legitimize this reinvention of republicanism whereby Kantian ethics and respect for the rule of law came to replace Rousseauian radicalism and its revolutionary ethos. Most governments of the Third Republic (1870–1940) governed from the center, as they successfully mobilized support against, first, resurgent monarchists, and then in the 1930s, the up-and-coming fascists on their right, and on their left against a growing socialist and communist threat. But the republicanism creed also justified using the power of the state to protect citizens against perceived injustices and abuses of power at the hands of employers in ways that classical liberals could not endorse, but which they were powerless to resist. These centrist republicans were nudged toward the construction of a modest welfare state by the solidarists. Solidarism is a doctrine elaborated by various social theorists, including Émile Durkheim, who has often been called the founder of modern sociology, and the philosopher Alfred Fouillée; it insists that the more privileged members of society owe a debt of sorts to those who were not able to take full advantage of the opportunities that an industrial society has to offer. The political leader Léon Bourgeois built a reformist political platform on these ideas, with the intention of offering an alternative to revolutionary socialism.

After 1945, however, the central state grew rapidly, and it gained control over a vast array of nationalized firms. A comprehensive welfare state was put in place that continued to grow for several decades afterward. The

social and economic policies of all governments, even those nominally conservative, tilted noticeably to the left. For a while, it seemed as if liberalism had been buried. In fact, there were almost no political philosophers capable of arguing about political issues and priorities insofar as the dominant schools of philosophy at that time, including Sartre's synthesis of Marxism and existentialism, were premised on the notion that politics is entirely conditioned by historical and economic forces beyond the control of bourgeois governments. This is not to say that politicians escaped criticisms at the hands of writers, artists, influential editorialists, academics, and so on. But the criticisms were mostly concerned with the mismanagement of the Algerian war or foreign policy issues related to the conduct of the Cold War.

There were a few exceptions to these trends. One was Albert Camus. Another was the (philosophically well versed) sociologist Raymond Aron. Through his widely read novels, Camus offered a vigorous defense of the ideal of liberty and although he shared with Sartre similar premises about the absurd character of life, criticized Sartre's contradictory merging of existentialism and communism. Aron was closer than Camus to being a political philosopher, but he was not taken seriously by most *engagés* intellectuals and cultural critics. (Today, however, scholarship about Aron is quite extensive.) His audience in the general public and the governing elites was far wider, but the latter focused primarily on his denunciation of orthodox Marxism and Soviet diplomacy. They downplayed his subtle analyses of the importance of a variety of freedoms in the economic, social, and political spheres to which they were more likely to pay lip service to than to embrace.

As a result of a conjunction of events that included the fall of the Soviet bloc, the absence of American entanglement in overseas operations, and domestically, the failure of the economic policies pursued by the Socialist party in power under President Mitterrand between 1980 and 1983 to which Mitterrand himself responded by giving free rein to his ministers to move in the direction of privatization and deregulation (including of the mass media)—there was a brief period during which something akin to an intellectual revolution unfolded. In a word, liberalism returned to the forefront of the intellectual scene. This return was not the doing of right-

wing libertarians, but primarily the result of new departures taken by formerly leftist historians and philosophers who abandoned their antiliberal prejudices.

Two overlapping strands of thought were at work. The first was centered on a revisionist historiography of the French Revolution put forward by François Furet and Mona Ozouf in several carefully researched pieces that emphasized the significance of the liberal element of the original revolutionary impetus and described 1793 as the betrayal of that ideal. This was an attack on the line of thought successfully defended until then by most historians of the Revolution, and notably Soboul, according to which the spirit of 1793 embodied the true meaning of the revolutionary era. The second strand is more properly philosophical and also more multifaceted. In brief, it consisted of efforts by thinkers such as Claude Lefort, Pierre Manent, Alain Renaut, Pierre Rosanvallon, Marcel Gauchet, Blandine Kriegel, Sophie Masure, among others, to rethink politics as something central to the human experience that cannot be reduced to political economy, as it tends to be for Marxists, nor to the manipulation of empty symbols as some postmodernists would have it. In liberal democracies, what politics ought to be most concerned with is the promotion of human rights. Although not prompted by John Rawls's reflections on similar subjects, this program of research naturally led to a belated engagement with American liberal egalitarian political philosophers (e.g., Rawls, Ronald Dworkin, and Michael Waltzer).

While these individualistic currents are still alive in academic circles, their reception in the educated public has encountered renewed obstacles in more recent years—a trend that has accelerated as a result of the economic crisis of 2008 and its ongoing effects. In that context, the popularity of new forms of progressive thinking have surfaced. Most notably, there is renewed interest in Pierre Bourdieu's theses on the significance of the unequal transmission of cultural capital in the structuration of hierarchies of power. Another noteworthy current is the ethics of care promoted by Anglo-American feminists (e.g., Carol Gilligan, Nel Noddings) and adopted by French sociologists and espoused by a few prominent French socialists, notably Marine Aubry.

Political Thought and Political Realities

The long shadow cast by the French Revolution was in part attributable to the manner in which the theories of great thinkers resonated in actual political life. For quite some time it set a pattern that defined the unique character of French politics and French political thought. Philosophers, essayists, and political leaders interacted in a very public way and the public—or at least, the literary public observed these jousts with great interest. This situation has changed, perhaps not radically, but significantly.

French-speaking philosophers and social scientists in France and elsewhere, just as in the English-speaking world, have become more professional and more specialized. They are more likely to correspond with colleagues halfway around the globe than with their nonacademic fellow countrymen. And the trend has been toward the adoption of ways of discussing problems that are analytic rather than holistic and speculative, even though critical approaches (which tend to be more holistic) are firmly rooted in French academia.

Nonetheless, there are at least two areas in which professional thinkers have stepped out of their ivory towers. The first is broadly defined as the set of interrelated questions that bear on immigration, multiculturalism, and religious tolerance; the second has to do with the consequences of globalization for the French model of the welfare state.

On the question of accommodating cultural differences, philosophers (e.g., Pierre-André Taguieff, Vincent Peillon, Luc Ferry) have joined a chorus of editorialists and essayists who, in spite of significant nuances, uphold the uncompromising secularism that has led the French state to ban the Islamic veil in public schools and more recently, wearing the burka in any public venue. The central theme of these interventions is that the republican ideal of citizenship precludes granting special status to any group.

With respect to globalization, the range of publicly expressed views is arguably somewhat wider (the blogosphere offers an impressive diversity of views). But for the most part, intellectuals from different backgrounds tend to support the popular sentiment echoed in the media that ultraliberalism

(i.e., arguments supportive of free markets) must be resisted and that public policy should, by all means, be aimed at the protection of the institutions and practices of the French welfare state.

Two concluding observations are in order. The first is that absent in these debates are the epic clashes of views that earlier generations witnessed (e.g., Sartre versus Aron on communism, Barrès versus Anatole France in the Dreyfus affair). Although French intellectual life continues to be rich in ideas, public intellectuals no longer think of themselves as the standard bearers of antagonistic ideologies and the public no longer expects them to act in that way. The second is that these two issues signal a tendency toward retrenchment, a feeling that French institutions and way of life in general are threatened. French intellectuals have lost the optimism and the conviction that animated thinkers of an earlier age that France had a message for the rest of the world. Sartre was probably the last intellectual cast in that mold.

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See also [Aron, Raymond](#); [Blanqui, Louis-Auguste](#); [Bonald, Louis de](#); [Conservatism](#); [Constant, Benjamin](#); [Constitutionalism](#); [Durkheim, Émile](#); [Fascism](#); [Feminism](#); [Foucault, Michel](#); [Fourier, Charles](#); [French Revolution](#); [Political Thought of the](#); [General Will](#); [Globalization](#); [Liberalism](#); [Nationalism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Postmodernism and Political Theory](#); [Power](#); [Proudhon, Pierre-Joseph](#); [Republicanism](#); [Revolution](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Rousseau, Jean-Jacques](#); [Sartre, Jean-Paul](#); [Separation of Powers](#); [Socialism](#); [Sorel, Georges](#); [Sovereignty](#); [State](#); [Terrorism](#); [Tocqueville, Alexis de](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [Utopianism](#); [Welfare State](#); [Theories of the](#)

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The French Revolution of 1789 and the events that unfolded until Napoleon Bonaparte proclaimed himself emperor in 1804 still occupy an important place in the mythology of Western civilization. While its effect on the course of history faded away gradually, it continues to be an inescapable point of reference in the history of political ideas. What the Revolution means, however, depends very much on the period or actors one singles out. Very different conclusions can be drawn from a reading of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen* or the speeches of Maximilien Robespierre. Iconic figures such as Honoré Riqueti de Mirabeau, George-Jacques Danton, Louis Antoine de Saint-Just, or Napoleon Bonaparte symbolize different episodes and currents whose influence and significance ought to be parsed carefully. Civic republicanism, liberalism, socialism, as well as conservatism, were shaped to a large extent by the ideas that inspired the revolutionaries, by the manner in which they appropriated them, or by the reactions and counterforces they unleashed.

Phases of the Revolution

Roughly speaking, the Revolution went through four phases: the early stages from the events of 1789 to the trial of Louis XVI and the proclamation of the Republic; the Terror (1792–94); the Thermidorian

reaction and the Directory (1794–99); and finally, the Consulate and the rise of Bonaparte (1800–04). In what follows, let us consider the ideas that best characterize these stages, the previous ideas to which they can be traced, their posterity, and the critiques and reaction they evoked. The philosophical views and political-economy doctrine that dominated the first period are embodied in two documents: the already cited *Declaration* and the *loi Le Chapelier*. The former is an interesting amalgam of classical liberal and utilitarian concepts (e.g., the general good or the good of all), but although the style is mostly Lockean, it also includes a few references to ideas usually associated with the works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (e.g., “law is the expression of the general will”). The preamble states, “The rights of man are natural, unalienable and sacred.” Article 2 declares them to be “liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression.” It is interesting that the right to property is thereby declared to be sacred in view of how quickly, under the influence of the Jacobin-dominated *Commune de Paris*, the revolutionary government moved toward measures such as price controls and the seizure of the properties of the enemies of the republic. Nonetheless, the 1789 Declaration stands out in this regard; not even the Bill of Rights in the American Constitution elevates property rights to this exalted status, although the Fourth and Fifth Amendments, respectively, provide strong protection against illegal seizure and guarantee compensation for property taken for public use. (And it should be added that James Madison did occasionally use the term *sacred* to describe property rights.) The Declaration also guarantees all the civil liberties that have become the hallmark of liberal democracies: equality before the law, protection against arbitrary imprisonment, freedom of religion, and freedom of expression. Liberties, however, remained largely ignored in several of the regimes that emerged in France a few years after the proclamation of the Declaration until they were finally given a firmer basis under the Third Republic (1870–1940).

By abolishing the medieval guilds, the *loi Le Chapelier* of 1791 created an unregulated labor market and established the conditions for the free exercise of the profession of one’s choice. It also served throughout much of the nineteenth century as the legal foundation for the prohibition of trade unions, which were not granted legal status in France until 1884. But while economic liberalism was less challenged in the succeeding years than

political liberalism, it was briefly threatened during the tumultuous years of the Jacobin Terror.

Had he lived through this era, Rousseau would probably have been horrified by the manner in which his ideas were used to justify the tyrannical regime of the Committee of Public Safety, specifically by Robespierre and Saint-Just. Yet even after these men's defeat, French republicanism, which under a succession of monarchical regimes struggled to hold onto its revolutionary roots, continued to be quite distinct from the Anglo-American republican tradition (from James Harrison in seventeenth-century England to Thomas Jefferson). The republicanism that appealed to French revolutionaries was typically neo-Athenian although a less vocal minority (who arguably became more dominant under the French Third Republic at the end of the nineteenth century) also defended a more neo-Roman vision, to use a typology that is commonly found in the literature on civic republicanism. The former insists on a creative style of politics and glorifies an actively engaged citizenry; the latter places more emphasis on the rule of law and a less active, albeit attentive and civically minded, public. Robespierre and Saint-Just were mostly impressed—even obsessed—by Rousseau's comments on civic virtue and the purity of the general will, which in their eyes justified the persecutions they visited on enemies whom they portrayed as impure.

The Terror came to an end in 1794 when the Jacobins were removed from power by the leaders of the Thermidorian reaction. All of the latter were members of the Convention, that is to say members of the assembly that Robespierre had mesmerized for the two years, but once in power they abandoned much of the Jacobin rhetoric. However, because of their own past as regicides, because of the climate created by the war efforts, and because of a resurgence of monarchist sentiments, they remained firmly committed to republicanism. They innovated, however, by trying to steer an ambiguous political and intellectual course away from the neo-Athenian republicanism of the Jacobins and toward something that resembled more neo-Roman ideals, for example, by adopting the concept of a bicameral legislature as a way to put in place constitutional checks and balances. The Directory enshrined these ideals, being founded on the revised constitution (*Constitution de l'an III*) that the Thermidorians had crafted. It was during

this era that Benjamin Constant began what would become a lifelong defense of classical liberal principles. From these he tried, not always successfully, to derive practical conclusions applicable to the politics of the moment. His first important political work was *De la force du gouvernement actuel et de la nécessité de s'y rallier* (1796) in which he attempted to legitimize the institutions of the Directory.

Paradoxically, it was also during this era, when bourgeois values and mores were well on their way to becoming the new normality, that an early forerunner of communism appeared on the political and intellectual scene. Gracchus (as he liked to call himself) Babeuf had been before 1789 a *feudiste*—that is, a member of the legal profession whose role was to ascertain on behalf of their aristocratic clients claims to contested privileges of nobility. He experienced severe setbacks in exercising this profession, leaving him with a deeply felt contempt for the aristocratic class and probably explaining in some measure his zeal for the pursuit of social equality. Because he spent much of the period prior to the Thermidorian reaction in jail (he had to fight accusations of fraud that had nothing to do with politics), he erupted on the political scene at a time when the egalitarian forces represented by the *sans-culottes* who had supported Robespierre were waning but when, nevertheless, food shortages were creating much resentment among the poor. In the pages of the journal he founded, *Le Tribun du Peuple*, Babeuf defended a conception of equality that went far beyond the rhetoric of equal rights by proposing an equal sharing of land resources. But his political role was short lived; in May of 1796 he joined the conspiracy of equals, which was quickly put down by the police, and after a lengthy trial, he was executed in 1797. Nevertheless, Babeuf was seen as an iconic figure by the revolutionary left and by the early European socialists throughout much of the nineteenth century.

Napoleon and After

The defeat of the Babouvist conspiracy solidified the power of the conservative republicans, but in their efforts to achieve social and political stability, they entered into a Faustian bargain with Napoleon Bonaparte, who proceeded in 1799 to overthrow the Directory and replace it with the Consulate. That regime was only a vehicle for his ambitions, and he

crowned himself Emperor in 1804. The cult of authoritarian leaders that plagued the twentieth century has its roots in the Napoleonic adventure. Nevertheless, it is inappropriate to lump together Napoleon and fascist dictators insofar as Napoleon was still a product of the French Revolution and of the rationalism of the Enlightenment. Although always ready to bend and twist the meaning of the motto “liberty, equality, fraternity,” he never sought to radically subvert these principles. While he reestablished titles of nobility, for example, he adhered to the idea of equality before the law so that such titles were merely honorary. In fact, he took pride in his work drafting the code civil prohibiting privileges based on birth and more generally, establishing a solid foundation for property rights and commercial life. In the final phase of his meteoric career, during the so-called hundred days after his return from Elba in 1815, he even called upon Constant to help him draft the constitution of a liberal parliamentary monarchy. In spite of the parallels evoked by the Napoleonic cult of charismatic leadership, the corporatist ideology and extreme elitist tendencies that defined fascist Italy under Benito Mussolini, Spain under Francisco Franco, and Portugal under António de Oliveira Salazar, owed more to the counterrevolutionary theories of thinkers such as Joseph de Maistre (1753–1821) and Louis de Bonald (1754–1840) than to Napoleon himself. Nevertheless, Napoleon’s conquest of Germany provoked an ethnic nationalism among German philosophers such as Johann Gottfried Herder that ultimately contributed to the idiosyncratic National Socialism of Hitler. In the Anglo-American world, this current of thought took a less virulent form under the pen of Edmund Burke, who condemned the Revolutionaries’ belief that they could reorganize society on the basis of reason alone but did not call for a return to absolutism.

In brief, the legacy of the French Revolution in the domain of ideas is complex and somewhat indeterminate. It includes elements of classical liberalism (the spirit of 1789) and republicanism, but the interpretation of the latter oscillated between Rousseauian or neo-Athenian currents that veered into revolutionary zeal and intolerance and neo-Roman currents that spoke in more restrained tones about constitutional checks and balances and the rule of law. (In his famous *On the Liberty of the Ancients Compared to That of the Moderns*, Constant draws a similar contrast.) The Revolution also planted the seeds of both radical egalitarianism and modern

authoritarianism. Recent historiography, notably in France, has sought to reevaluate the significance of the less revolutionary and more liberal sides of this legacy but the fact remains that the events of both 1789 and of 1793 continue to define this ambiguous period. An indirect legacy of the Revolution took the form of a reactionary political thought that claimed to return to the values of the *ancien régime* while actually introducing into European political philosophy a new form of irrationalist intransigence that rejected all aspects of the liberal faith in individual freedoms and social progress.

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See also [Babeuf, Gracchus](#); [Bonald, Louis de](#); [Communism, Varieties of](#); [Conservatism](#); [Constant, Benjamin](#); [Constitutionalism](#); [Dictatorship of the Proletariat](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [French Enlightenment](#); [French Political Thought](#); [Liberalism](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Locke, John](#); [Maistre, Joseph de](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Radicalism](#); [Republicanism](#); [Revolution](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Rousseau, Jean-Jacques](#); [Russian Revolution](#); [Political Thought of the](#); [Scottish Enlightenment](#); [Terrorism](#)

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Freud And Social Theory

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Freud and Social Theory

Sigmund Freud extended psychoanalysis from an individual psychology and therapy to a broad sociopolitical theory that provided a history of civilization and strategies for addressing various social problems besetting Western societies. In a diverse set of writings, ranging from the prevention of war to sexual mores, he offered what he believed were scientific, rational strategies that employed psychoanalytic tenets to reform repressive society. And beyond these therapeutic efforts, he suggested historical accounts of the origin of primitive societies, the role of religion, and the general development of civilization as resulting from the same psycho-dynamics he had discovered in individuals. Freud maintained throughout his cultural and historical works a cautious hope about the future of humankind, if through education and a more tolerant policy toward sexuality, the self-destructive forces of human nature might be turned into constructive cultural enterprises.

Some even find in Freud a modestly utopian vision, based on science as a promoter of the Enlightenment ideals of reason and autonomy. By contrast, postmodern and feminist thinkers, as well as behaviorists such as B. F. Skinner, express skepticism about each of these ideals. Both Freud and many of his critics begin with the fundamental issue of the extent to which neurosis—or self-limiting psychic conflict—arises from inner maladjustment (inadequacies of the individual) versus the repressive role of society, which then becomes the primary culprit in producing neurosis. This debate, framed by Freud himself, involves the possibility of self-exploration

according to psychoanalysis as well as its applications to the betterment of society as a whole. It has dominated much of twentieth-century social theorizing.

Freud's Social Writings

Freud's engagement in explaining social phenomena and their historical origins ranged widely, extending from the origins of religion and morality to the sources of social order and disorder and from the psychodynamics of cultural development to the relationship of human nature and culture. Building upon his insights derived from psychoanalysis, he sought to improve society by reducing psychic conflict, a task that depended on releasing excess repression, both socially and intrapsychically. With successful psychoanalysis, a modified self-image and altered behaviors allowed individuals to become more socially adaptive. Freud's meliorism, extending from the individual to society-at-large, cautiously promoted enhanced freedom and social well-being, balanced against his own understanding that discord and aggression were inextricable from human congress.

Although the later works, notably *Future of an Illusion* (1927) and *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930), are Freud's most often cited social-theoretical writings, in fact these interests date at least to his university days and persisted throughout his career. His first published foray into social criticism, "Sexuality in the Aetiology of the Neuroses" (1898), a diatribe against bourgeois sexuality, closely coincided with his creative eruption around the writing of *Interpretation of Dreams* (1900). Freud did not offer an extended extrapolation of psychoanalytic theory until ten years later with the publication in 1908 of "'Civilized' Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illness" in which he drew together various themes to expressly link sexual repression with neurosis and perversion. The correlation between the tensions of modern life and nervous disorders was hardly a novel insight, but the direct relationship to sexual repression extended Freud's own theory of psycho-sexual development and expression to the larger cultural context.

The other side of the repressive equation was the inability of the subject to adapt to the demands of reality—that is, the weakness of the ego became

the decisive factor. Once Freud shifted from focusing on sexual theory to the beginnings of an ego psychology with “On Narcissism” (1914), he was led to a more complex social psychology, which dominated much of his thought for the next twenty-five years.

The mechanisms Freud invoked in the writings prior to *Totem and Taboo* (1913) reflected the push-and-pull of Newtonian mechanics that characterized his instinctual theory, which was framed by the exclusive focus upon sexual frustration. However, in *Taboo* Freud began to move toward an ego-oriented psychology. With this inflection in his theory, he argued that the social instincts are not primary, but emerge as the product of a combination of egoistic and erotic components contextualized and expressed within the social context. Rooted in the primal crime (or fantasy) of killing the father, the social bond among the murderous brothers is in precarious balance with the aggression of self-assertion.

A “solution” is offered in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921), albeit with highly mixed results: Only love can overcome the individual narcissism and hatred that divide people, and thus, the adored leader not only unites the nation under a collective identity, but marshals aggression to release a collective need. Within the context of fascism, Freud hoped that the lessons derived from psychoanalytic theory would free the individual from this group bondage and build an individualized, free psychology. Thus, whether led by Jesus or Adolf Hitler, the individual must be freed by unmasking the infantile nature of passion for authority.

The Future of an Illusion (1927) may fairly be regarded as the most optimistic of Freud’s social writings. He begins with the bald assertion that every individual is an enemy of civilization because human nature is instinctively destructive. Society, of course, must impose socially integrative behavior, but then Freud states the central challenge that organizes all of his reform efforts. As he first stated in 1898, and now continued thirty years later, Freud condemns society for its excessive controls, and more specifically, he bewails the psychic imprisonment imposed by excessive repression, not only for the price extracted on individual human happiness, but for the inevitable failure of that repression. The toll ranges from emotional disquiet, to neurosis, to self-destructive and

antisocial behaviors, and most catastrophically, to war. A core philosophical point organizes this reformist and arguably utopian vision—the triumph of science and reason:

The voice of the intellect is a soft one, but it does not rest till it has gained a hearing. Finally, after a countless succession of rebuffs, it succeeds. This is one of the few points on which one may be optimistic about the future of mankind, but it is in itself a point of no small importance. And from it one can derive yet other hopes. (Freud 1953–74, 20:53)

Indeed, “There is no appeal to a court above that of reason” (ibid., 28), and from that position, Freud mused about a reformist-utopian psychology, whereby, as suggested later by Frankfurt school critical theorists, a liberation politics might emerge from psychoanalytic insight (see Moss 2005).

Freud’s assertions were bold. His social theory followed a basic template: by applying a therapy that worked on his patients (and thereby also validated his theory), he then extrapolated the individual drives to the selfsame forces that operate in the collective aggregate. In the simplest scenario, repression of the erotic caused psychic conflict, instinctual imbalance, misplaced objects of emotional investment, and ultimately self-destructive effects. On this view, the very structure of psychoanalytic thinking potentially embeds a utopian revision of Western culture, inasmuch as individuals might shepherd their destructive drives to a better balance with the erotic, with the result that individuals could flourish in a transformed society organized around a proper balance of work and pleasure, as opposed to repressive control based on what Herbert Marcuse later called the performance principle. So at least Freud thought at the time. Three years later, he seems to have become more pessimistic.

Civilization and Its Discontents (1930) addresses the psychic dynamics of human aggression, which, beginning with *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), Freud came to depict as the displacement onto others of the death instinct, perpetually at war with the libidinal and egoistic life instincts.

Conversely, humans build relationships and culture in service to Eros, and thus, a fundamental conflict characterizes civilized life. Inasmuch as Eros and Thanatos, or the death instinct from which the aggressive drives derive, are pitted against each other, the psychoanalytic story of civilization is the history of erotically enlisted constructive forces in chronic battle with the destructive death instincts. The work ends with a famous (or infamous) nonconclusion:

The fateful question for the human species seems to me to be whether and to what extent cultural development will succeed in mastering . . . the human instinct of aggression and self-destruction. . . . Eros will make an effort to assert himself in the struggle with his equally immortal adversary. But who can see with what success and with what result? (Freud 1953–74, 21:145)

Within this complex play of forces, humans must find their own way—that is, no universal, general formula exists as two vectors must be accounted for, namely, (1) the restrictions on individual freedom imposed by the strictures of society, and (2) the successful deployment of sublimation, a culturally approved form of displacement that not only redirects libidinal energies for individual satisfaction, but becomes the crucial element in forging the collective into a cohesive social whole. Simply, sublimation and its accompanying work ethic push individual interests into synchrony with the group's own welfare.

The Ethics of Freudian Social Theory

The success Freud witnessed through analysis convinced him that an alternate mode of acculturation was possible based on the insights psychoanalysis offered. Despite Freud's well-known pessimism about the effective control of the instincts, in particular the destructive death instinct, he suggested that the complex dialectic of their interplay and the implicit balance that must be attained for individual and social health remained a therapeutic and societal possibility. Indeed, as Abraham Drassinower (2003) observes, the acceptance and integration of the death instinct are

both an ethical and existential task, which if denied (in Freudian terms) leads not only to a thwarted life, but also to neurosis. On this view, Freud's theory of culture is an inquiry into the viability of the species, which then becomes a fateful and ethical task.

Freud's theory embraces two partially conflicting metaphysical positions: one derived from Freud's scientific training: the causation witnessed in the natural world, coupled to his naturalism, made him substantially a determinist. The other stance, derived from his humanistic metaphysics, regarded humans as endowed with a consciousness that is inspired by hope and that employs reason to navigate the world—psychologically, socially, and biologically. Because significantly deterministic unconscious forces comprise the central tenet of psychoanalytic theory, wherever in his writings Freud discusses free will, he cautions that such freedom is limited. The promise of psychoanalysis builds upon the ability of reason, albeit with emotional recognition and reconciliation, to reveal the secrets of unconscious drives and thereby better live with them. Freud's central therapeutic insight, that the self-understanding gained by free association in analysis can be curative of self-limiting psychic conflicts, offered a degree of potential freedom and psychic health to the individual, as well as hope for a less repressive and less conflictual society. Thus, psychoanalytic theory is based both on a central paradox—we are determined, yet free—and on a therapeutic method for at least partially resolving the paradox.

Broad philosophical issues emerge from this position, for beyond the epistemology bequeathed by Freudianism, a powerful metaphysical challenge has also been offered, namely, the precarious status of human autonomy (mediated and constituted by the faculty of reason) raised by uncovering unconscious processes that are nonrational. To the extent that the ego as a monitoring system feels free, it does so as a consequence of its epistemological location and function as an observer of deeper mental functions. In some sense, this so-called freedom is required to fulfill its judgmental role. Yet according to Freudian tenets, deterministic unconscious forces often trump the ego's conceit.

Regarding the larger metastructure of Freud's thought, he was committed to the Enlightenment ideals of reason's power, the improvability of

humankind, and, from the vantage of a physician, the therapeutic promise of analysis. The essential feature of these projects rests upon the central paradox underlying psychoanalysis—we are determined yet free: “Analysis does not set out to make pathological reactions impossible, but to give the patient’s ego the *freedom* to decide one way or the other” (Freud 1953–74, 19:50; emphasis in original). The powerful unconscious, whose demands will not easily be denied by “the proud superstructure of the mind” (Freud 1953–74, 17:260), of course, is a central tenet of psychoanalysis, so Freud leaves a perpetual conflict at the base of his theory.

Freud’s therapeutic ethos offered the possibility of rational self-understanding and thereby of psychological health and improvement. By extrapolation of individual psychology to the social group, Freud also envisioned the possibility of transforming society for the better. What was required, he argued in *The Future of an Illusion*, was the replacement of illusionary individual and collective defense mechanisms such as religion with the curative potential of scientific understanding. On this view, Freud can be read as both a child of the Enlightenment and a futuristic apostle of humanism.

Conclusion

In *The Future of an Illusion*, Freud both took note of and remained agnostic about the future of the socialist experiment then ongoing in the Soviet Union. His low opinion of the masses and his circumspect view of the prospects for utopian change nevertheless were offset by glimmers of hope. The Freudian prescription, based on analytic insight, modeled social reform on psychoanalytic success: identify the unhealthy repression and free it to allow a healthy expression of the erotic. For those who have accepted the Freudian theory of psychic dynamics, the lessons learned provide an important orientation for social reform. How, in fact, better psychic balance and healthy release of unrequited desire would be achieved and how such a massive reformation of obstructive social forces might be accomplished, Freud did not predict. However, Freud’s fundamental teachings inspired later political theorists such as Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, and Herbert Marcuse to develop their own philosophies in response to our era’s dominant theoretician of human nature and society.

Alfred I. Tauber

See also [Authority](#); [Alienation](#); [Critical Theory](#); [Foucault, Michel](#); [Fourier, Charles](#); [Frankfurt School](#); [German Political Thought](#); [Human Nature, Theories of](#); [Liberalism](#); [Marcuse, Herbert](#); [Mass Society](#); [Psychoanalysis and Political Thought](#); [Totalitarianism](#); [Utopianism](#)

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Jason N. Brock Jason N. Brock

Friedman, Milton

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Friedman, Milton

Although he is primarily thought of as an economist, Milton Friedman (1912–2006) had a considerable impact on political thought and political practice in the latter half of the twentieth century. He was a prolific writer, and his output ranged from technical and specialist pieces on economics to writings targeted for popular appeal. His most notable work is *Capitalism and Freedom* (1962), while *Free to Choose* (1980, written with Rose Friedman), and *The Tyranny of the Status Quo* (1984, written with Rose Friedman) are also books for a general audience that espouse Friedman's political and economic ideas. In addition, *A Monetary History of the United States, 1867–1960* (1963, written with Anna J. Schwartz), although ostensibly a work of economic history, had a significant bearing on monetarist political economy.

Friedman was born in Brooklyn, New York, and his family relocated to Rahway, New Jersey, when he was just one year old. His parents were Jewish immigrants to the United States and were not well off financially. Friedman attended Rutgers University on a scholarship to study mathematics and graduated in 1932. He then completed an MA in economics at the University of Chicago, an institution that he would come to be most associated with, in 1933, and it was there that he met his future wife, Rose Director. Friedman went to work for the National Resources Committee before being hired by the National Bureau of Economic Research in 1937, a position that afforded him the financial security to marry Rose in 1938. During World War II, he was employed by the

Treasury Department and created the withholding tax system in the United States before being awarded a PhD from Columbia University in 1946, capped by his dissertation, *Incomes from Independent Professional Practice*.

Friedman returned to Chicago in 1948 as Professor of Economics and would remain there until 1977, during which time he received the 1967 Nobel Prize in Economics and became the influential leading light of the Chicago school of economics. He worked as an economic advisor to Ronald Reagan during his 1980 presidential candidacy and went on to serve on the President's Economic Policy Advisory Board following Reagan's election. The 1980s were the height of Friedman's fame, and his economic ideas held considerable stock among a number of right-of-center governments across the world, especially the Reagan administration in the United States and Margaret Thatcher's government in the United Kingdom, although many conservatives balked at Friedman's libertarian attitude to social questions such as drug control. Friedman died in San Francisco, California, in 2006 at the age of 94.

Friedman's political thought and his economic philosophy are intricately linked, and it is not feasible to discuss one without the other. As Friedman wrote in *Capitalism and Freedom*, the view that politics and economics are separate and unconnected is a delusion, and only a few combinations of economic and political arrangements are possible. Simply put, his conviction was that capitalism promotes freedom while socialism suppresses it. Moreover, he opposed the Keynesian consensus that dominated political economy between the end of World War II and the close of the 1970s. In its place, he advocated a macroeconomic policy known as monetarism that argued for the role of the state to be reduced to little more than the regulation of the money supply to ensure that monetary supply and demand were in equilibrium. In Friedman's ideal, a body free from political interference should undertake this role.

Friedman's economic view had political ramifications beyond the technical realm of money supply. By favoring a less regulated approach to capitalism, Friedman argued for a less interventionist role for government in the economy. In particular, he argued that legally enforced monopolies, such as

that of the U.S. Postal Service, should be opened up to private competition. Friedman did not, however, oppose a public monopoly in all cases, acknowledging that technical monopolies may exist and that in such a case economic freedom is not necessarily harmed. He also proposed state funding for some private schools to supplement the education system, argued that a negative income tax (i.e., an income subsidy for the poor) would be more equitable than other forms of welfare redistribution, supported the relaxation of drug controls, and vociferously criticized the idea of a conscript military. The common thread throughout Friedman's political thought was the goal of freedom of choice.

The most obvious influences on Friedman's thought were Frank Knight, Jacob Viner, and Henry Simons, all prominent economists associated with the Chicago school. The impact of the Austrian school on Friedman is also readily apparent, especially the work of Ludwig von Mises and Friedrich Hayek. Friedman's own influence has been wide-ranging and can be observed both in politics and economics. Among the most notable followers of aspects of Friedman's thought are Thatcher, Reagan, and Ben Bernanke, alongside the Chicago school's adherents.

Jason N. Brock

See also [American Political Thought](#); [Capitalism](#); [Conservatism](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Friedman, Milton](#); [Globalization](#); [Hayek, Friedrich](#); [Justice](#); [Liberalism](#); [Libertarianism](#); [Mass Society](#); [Neoconservatism](#); [Neoliberalism](#); [Planning](#); [Property](#); [Theories of](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Game Theory

Game theory

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Game Theory

Game theory is the mathematical analysis of strategic-decision problems in which at least two decision makers (or players) choose alternatives that produce an outcome that affects all decision makers involved in the problem (or game). The analysis of a game hinges on knowing (and assuming that the players all know) how the players' choices lead to the possible outcomes of the game and how each player values the possible outcomes relative to one another (i.e., their preferences). The main assumption is that the decision makers are purposive, choosing actions that are most likely to get them to their objective given the structure of the game and understanding that the other decision makers are pursuing their own objectives. This assumption is known as the *economic rationality* (not to be confused with other notions of rationality in political theory).

Game theory is actually a set of tools and not a theory in its own right. The theorist needs to insert the objective whose consequences she or he wishes to explore. In economics, this objective is usually profit maximization. In politics, two common objectives are office seeking and policy goals; these may even inform each other in that an office-seeking politician may choose particular policy goals in her or his drive to gain or retain office. In international relations, many objectives have been credited to states: power, security, national wealth, and survival.

The political application of game theory has its earliest roots in the works of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Hobbes, in

particular, may be read (cf. Gauthier 1969; Kavka 1986; Skyrms 1990; Binmore 1995) as having postulated a world in which individuals faced what modern game theorists would call a prisoner's dilemma. In its simplest form, two individuals choose between cooperating with or defecting against one another. Each is assumed to be best off by defecting if and only if the other chooses cooperation; mutual cooperation is next best; mutual defection is third best; cooperating when the other defects is worst. It is a dilemma in the sense that thinking about only shortterm, economic rationality leads both individuals to defect, but each individual logically prefers mutual cooperation over mutual defection.

A game-theoretic solution to the prisoner's dilemma is to recognize that most social interactions are not short-term, but are repeated frequently (cf. Taylor 1976; Axelrod 1984). When individuals put sufficient weight on future interactions, mutual cooperation becomes possible (even for narrowly egoistic decision makers) without requiring an outside enforcing actor. While cooperation under this anarchic condition becomes possible, it is by no means assured. Actors putting insufficient weight on future interactions or seeking short-term gains may continue to defect. If this segment of the population becomes sufficiently large, it can have a cascading effect such that cooperation in society breaks down. In this way, Hobbes was quite right to recognize that entering into a covenant may be easier than maintaining it over time.

Game theory, through social-choice theory, raises issues for democracy as well. Kenneth Arrow (1951; cf. Black 1948) proved that a voting system could not be both fair (applying ideas of social-preference desirability derived in part from Condorcet) and nonmanipulable. As many of the voting systems used by nations and by legislatures can be manipulated by a minority of actors (leading William Riker [1986] to argue that politics is really about heresthetics, or the art of political manipulation); this impossibility theorem questions the value of democracy. The selectorate theory of Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and colleagues (2003) provides a defense of democracy. Building on the observations of David Hume (from his essay "Of the First Principles of Government" 1748) that even the "soldan of Egypt, or the emperor of Rome, might drive his harmless subjects, like brute beasts, against their sentiments and inclination: But he

must, at least, have led his mamalukes, or praetorian bands, like men, by their opinion,” they argue that all leaders care about their political survival. Depending on the institutional rules they find themselves in, they go about achieving their political survival in different ways. Most basically, authoritarian leaders (like the soldan of Egypt or the emperor of Rome) provide private benefits to their closest supporters to maintain the supporters’ favorable opinion. Democratic leaders, according to their argument, have too many such supporters to provide meaningful private benefits; therefore, they provide public goods that benefit not only their supporters, but also the country as a whole.

It is important to remember that the “good” outcome or society is still defined by the theorist. While we may generally want people to cooperate to have a harmonious society, we may equally, for the benefit of the larger society, wish for prisoners and malcontents to be prevented from cooperating with each other.

Christopher Butler

See also [Contract Theory](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Political Science and Political Thought](#); [Psychoanalysis and Political Thought](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Dennis Dalton Dennis Dalton

Gandhi, Mohandas (Mahatma)

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Gandhi, Mohandas (Mahatma)

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869–1948) became, from 1919 to 1947, the most prominent leader of the Indian movement for national independence from British imperial rule. He is renowned for having developed a theory and practice of nonviolent thought and action that he called *satyagraha*. This term, coined by Gandhi as early as 1907, combined two words from ancient Sanskrit: *satya* (truth) with *agraha* (adhering to firmly). He translated *satyagraha* into English as the nonviolent force of truth and love when these qualities were fully realized and applied to the transformation of politics and society.

The Essence of Gandhi's Thought

Gandhi distinguished his method of action from passive resistance, a term used by the suffragettes that he deemed misleading because it failed to convey the intensely active power of nonviolence. Gandhi insisted that *satyagraha* was so powerful that it could and must “exclude every form of violence, direct or indirect, and whether in thought, word or deed” (Gandhi 1996, 29). If the leader and the people do not have a belief in nonviolence as both a creedal and pragmatic imperative, violence might seem like the only way to resolve conflict. Martin Luther King Jr. who adopted Gandhi's methods in America, correctly emphasized that to understand nonviolent methods of social change, it is essential to start with a study of Gandhi's philosophy of *satyagraha*.

This point about grasping the unity of Gandhi's theory and practice was underscored by Howard Gardner (1993), in *Creating Minds*, when he compared Gandhi with Sigmund Freud, Albert Einstein, and Pablo Picasso and contended, "Gandhi was a thinker of the highest order. The conception of *satyagraha* was worked out as carefully as a philosophical system, with every step and its possible consequences carefully calibrated" (355).

India, and eventually the world, knew him as the "Mahatma" or "Great Soul" because outstanding among political leaders, he represented high moral or spiritual virtues as well as an effective use of political power. Gandhi expressed his ideal of nonviolence when he said, "Be the change you wish to see in the world." He believed that social transformation must come from within each individual: violence emanates from internal hatred or insecurity. Purging negative thoughts associated with anger or hatred is necessary because such sentiments undermine our capacities for peaceful conduct. The value of this insight has been developed by the psychologist Barbara Fredrickson in her work *Positivity* (2009). Her work, along with that of Gardner and Martin Seligman, offers a focus on positive emotions, which parallels Gandhi's reinforcement of nonviolent attitudes.

The only way for nonviolent power to be waged is through love, love of oneself, of others, and of peaceful change. Gandhi wrote that *ahimsa* "means the largest love, greatest charity. If I am a follower of *ahimsa*, I must love my enemy" (Gandhi 1996, 40). Gandhi taught that love was ultimately more powerful than hate, but in order to love one another, one must first love oneself, a quality often missing in people who have been victimized and oppressed. Gandhi's first step in advocating nonviolent resistance, therefore, was to heighten Indian self-esteem. The British Empire had dominated India for over a hundred years and had derided Indians as cowardly, passive, and weak. Gandhi told them that they possessed loving and compassionate attitudes that embodied the highest form of strength. Weak people exploded in anger and sought self-protection in weaponry; it takes superior strength to arm oneself instead with restraint and empathy. Indians, if they could transform their anger toward the British colonizer into empathy, would become more disciplined for *satyagraha*.

Gandhi's central justification of nonviolence was that all humans are made of the same infinite spirit that we are all interconnected, and by extension, one cannot harm another without harming oneself. Gandhi believed that once we see the unity of all beings, violence is impermissible because we are all part of one another, and thus to harm a person means inflicting injury on oneself. This verse from the *Bhagavad Gita*, the supreme sacred text of Hinduism, captured Gandhi's ultimate sanction for nonviolence:

Arming himself with discipline, seeing everything with an equal eye, he (the sage) sees the self in all creatures and all creatures in the self. (vi. 29)

Aware of this passage from his favorite text, Gandhi wrote in *Young India: A Weekly Journal*,

I do not believe that an individual may gain spiritually and those that surround him suffer. I believe in the essential unity of man and for that matter of all that lives. Therefore I believe that if one man gains spiritually, the whole world gains with him, and if one man falls, the whole world falls to that extent. (December 4, 1924, 398)

The goal of a political movement is to attain liberation: freedom from grievances imposed by an oppressive government. Through nonviolent action or civil disobedience, a people can attain liberation both internally and internationally, by learning to see the essential truth that is the unity of humanity. It is this realization that brings freedom in the fullest sense. Gandhi's accomplishment of liberating India from British colonial rule showed that there is power in nonviolent action and that civil disobedience to obtain change can be expressed in the most peaceful of means without harming the physical or mental integrity of another human being. In fact, Gandhi believed that nonviolence was more effective than violence. He wrote, "Power is of two kinds. One is obtained by the fear of punishment and the other by acts of love. Power based on love is a thousand times more effective" (Gandhi 1996, 29).

Gandhi's Personal Development

Gandhi was born on October 2, 1869, into an affluent Hindu family in the city of Porbandar on the west coast of India. He was the youngest of five children. His father, Kaba Gandhi, was an influential political figure, having served in several public positions. Gandhi described him as “truthful, brave and generous, but short-tempered.” Being quick to anger is a severe judgment in Gandhian terms, especially when he contrasts his father’s behavior with the flawless patience and unconditional love expressed by his mother. She is portrayed as faultless: “deeply religious” to the point of “saintliness,” shown especially in her limitless spirit of self-sacrifice for her family. He makes clear that the decisive influence on his life came from his mother.

In his *Autobiography*, Gandhi conveys his early youth as fraught with shyness, academic mediocrity, and betrayal even by his closest friends. He recalls feelings of acute guilt toward his father combined with intense jealousy of his child bride, Kasturbai, as they struggled through an arranged marriage beginning when they were both only thirteen years old. Worst of all were his inner fears: “I was a coward. I used to be haunted by the fear of thieves, ghosts and serpents. I did not dare to stir out of doors at night. Darkness was a terror to me” (Gandhi 1996, 5). Courage and fearlessness became hard sought virtues that he would first acquire as an adult and then embody as a national leader.

Yet his extraordinary journey of the mind took him first to London, where he studied law from 1888 to 1891. Here he developed not resistance to British rule of India, but to the contrary, complete infatuation with everything English. He started at age nineteen in London by entering awkwardly into English society, determined to “be clumsy no more, but to try to become polished” (Gandhi 1996, 7). Twenty years later, he would reject emphatically this early obsessive emulation of English values, but in his twenties, as a prosperous lawyer, his career flourished at first by imitating and practicing what he had learned in England.

In 1893, London law degree in hand, Gandhi went to South Africa to pursue a legal career by representing members of the Indian community there. No

one then could have predicted that he would spend twenty-one years in South Africa, much less the extent to which that long experience would transform his whole life.

The first big change came from his disillusionment with the British rule there, whose empire then included South Africa. Gandhi had encountered racist abuse from the first days of his arrival in Durban, where he was assaulted on a train by offending the iron laws of apartheid. His emulation of the British, though, went very deep, and for years he excused such abuses as unrepresentative of the real spirit of British civilization, which he characterized as intrinsically just and fair. As late as 1905, after having practiced law in South Africa for twelve years, Gandhi urged his Indian community, “We should not envy Britain, but emulate its example” (Gandhi 1996, 8). By 1909, at age forty, a giant leap of consciousness had occurred and with it a dramatic clarion call to resisting British rule: “If India copies England,” he declared, “it is my firm conviction that she will be ruined.”

What explains this drastic about-face? Gandhi’s rebel spirit emerged first in the summer of 1906, with the British response to the Zulu rebellion, an uprising that British soldiers suppressed with shocking brutality. Gandhi entered that summer so loyal to his colonial rulers that he volunteered to serve as a medic with the English troops. He soon discovered that what the British had characterized as a rebellion was really a massacre, often of innocent African civilians. He initially consoled himself by attending to wounded Zulus, but soon his assumptions about English civilization, fixed for decades, completely collapsed. As he was forced to witness the wanton cruelty of the oppressor, rationalized by the uncompromising doctrine of apartheid, Gandhi recoiled in agony against all modes of imperial domination. He had been radicalized by military violence into a detestation of all that it manifested, and soon only a creed of nonviolent action against it would satisfy his spirit.

The Conceptual Relationship Between Power and Freedom

Gandhi's thought is especially distinctive in its subtle conceptual relationship between his theories of nonviolent power and freedom. The idea of freedom he called *swaraj*, a term that he again had derived from an ancient Sanskrit concept that conflated personal and political liberation. An inward sense of psychological or spiritual freedom attained by each person through self-examination became, Gandhi claimed, an absolute prerequisite to the collective political independence that the nationalist movement sought. Freedom as *swaraj*, then, acquired deep philosophical roots.

Swaraj, too, came out of Gandhi's early South African experience, and like *satyagraha*, it was adapted to eventually revolutionize India. These two concepts, *satyagraha* and *swaraj*, the power of nonviolence and a freedom both external and internal, became the twin ideological pillars of Gandhi's Indian nationalist movement. Together they meant that the end of India's independence could be attained only through nonviolent means. Violence would necessarily corrupt the struggle because it violated the central truth of our human connectedness. The movement would teach this lesson through ingenious applications of *satyagraha*, a process that alone could produce *swaraj*.

Gandhi explained that not only is nonviolence ethically superior to violence, but also it can be stronger: unless its force is diluted or contaminated by anger or enmity. "*Satyagraha* is gentle, it never wounds. It must not be the result of anger or malice. It was conceived as a complete substitute for violence." It must probe the inner consciousness of its practitioner to rid the mind and spirit of hatred. *Swaraj*, therefore, had both internal and external aspects. "The outward freedom," Gandhi declared, "that we shall attain will only be in exact proportion to the inward freedom to which we may have grown at a given moment. And if this is the correct view of freedom, our chief energy must be concentrated upon achieving reform from within" (Gandhi 1996, 97–98). Not every political leader will insist that "true freedom" requires "an improvement of the self" and that the oppressed are responsible for liberating not only themselves but also their oppressors in the process of nonviolent action.

Campaigns of Mass Civil Disobedience

Nonviolent action is expressed most clearly, dramatically, and effectively in the form of civil disobedience or noncooperation with an unjust authority. After Gandhi's return to India from South Africa, he gained control of the nationalist movement by 1919 and launched not only the nation's, but also the world's first mass political movement of nonviolent action. Significant elements of the British administration in India were paralyzed, and independence from colonial rule seemed possible. But the mere departure of the British would not, in Gandhi's mind, fulfill the essentials of *swaraj*. *Swaraj* could come only when the Indian people had gained the self-discipline and spirit of humanity that his goal of true freedom demanded. Thus, when a small but fierce outbreak of violence occurred in early 1922, Gandhi stopped the entire national campaign. It would not resume until he believed that his country was ready for a purer form of disciplined civil disobedience.

This second *satyagraha* came in 1930, and for India and the world, it was certainly worth waiting for: a mass drama of nonviolent action entirely unprecedented in history. It became known as the salt march because of its ingenious choice of issue and its leadership style of enactment. Its specific object was to protest against the tax that the British government had placed on salt, which was an enforced official monopoly on the manufacture of salt, restricting its handling to government controlled salt depots and levying a tax on all purchases. Gandhi argued that if the government could tax a basic commodity and necessity like salt, then next there would be a tax on "the water that we drink from our wells or the air that we breathe in our own country" (quoted in Dalton 2012, 101).

He proceeded to defy the salt monopoly and break the law by marching 240 miles to the sea, and there, he simply collected natural salt from the seashore near the village of Dandi on the western coast. Gandhi not only announced this outright defiance beforehand to the press, but also wrote ten days before the salt march would begin a personal letter to Lord Edward Irwin, the Viceroy or chief representative of the Empire in India. These announcements gave the government ample opportunity to arrest him. To the public, there was a fearless quality to Gandhi's openness, announcing with calm and determined forcefulness that he did believe that he had a duty toward the government, the duty to disobey.

Both the government and its subjects soon perceived that Gandhi intended not merely to gather illegally a handful of salt, but rather to summon a tide of mass civil disobedience. This is precisely what he did. On March 12, 1930, Gandhi, age sixty years, left his ashram near the city of Ahmedabad with seventy-eight followers, bound for the shores of Dandi. Gathering thousands of sympathizers along the way, he was watched by news reporters from around the world over the twenty-four days he marched. When he swept into Dandi on April 5th and picked up a few grams of salt early the next morning, his declaration to all nations came loud and clear: “Join me in this struggle of right against might.”

Gandhi’s theory and practice of *satyagraha* were more clearly demonstrated and achieved in the salt march than at any other time in his long career. First, he not only mobilized millions of Indian participants, but also significantly included sympathizers from around the world. For example, he chose a young English Quaker named Reginald Reynolds to hand deliver his historic letter to Lord Irwin, so personifying the inclusion of Britons in the struggle. American supporters were equally present, among them reporters such as Webb Miller, who published compelling graphic accounts of the march in U.S. newspapers. For those who argue, then and now, that only violence is newsworthy, Gandhi proved the contrary, even being named “Man of the Year” by *Time* magazine for “creating history in 1930.”

To his own people above all, he gave the clarion call of “come, march with me.” The vast peasantry, backbone of the movement, heard him beckon them with his consistent emphasis on issues or methods meant to have mass appeal: from the choice of the central issue, the salt tax, a grievance felt especially by the poor; to the means of the march extending twenty-four days, thus giving peasants time to join him as he walked the long distance to the sea; the simplicity of his clothing (homespun cotton cloth called *khadi*) and daily diet, all symbolic of a leader who could be trusted because he was one of them.

Then there were other large groups such as the students who left their schools, flooding into the campaign; yet, there was also the phenomenon of thousands of women, not previously politicized, especially who sought arrest for buying contraband salt that appeared everywhere in markets. By

the end of 1930, over a hundred thousand from all these groups had followed Gandhi to prison, whom the British government, torn by ambivalence in the face of world opinion, finally arrested on May 5.

Gandhi's Fasts Against Religious Violence After Indian Independence

India at last achieved independence from Britain on August 15, 1947, a full twenty-eight years after Gandhi had assumed leadership of the nationalist movement; evidence that when nonviolent struggle against an entrenched authoritarian regime does work, it may require decades of persistence. While India's freedom began a long process of decolonization throughout the world, the subcontinent itself became submerged in mass violence.

As early as 1921, Gandhi had warned, "Let the Hindus and Muslims understand firmly that the cornerstone of *swaraj*, the cornerstone of the freedom of India, is Hindu and Muslim unity" (quoted in Dalton 2012, 139). Yet in the end, his appeals went unheard, and at the time of independence, as religious war consumed his country, Gandhi confessed his failure. He acknowledged the grim truth that Indian culture had at least as much capability for civil violence as any other, that this could occur despite all the emphasis given to nonviolence since 1919, and that although India had gained independence, it certainly had not achieved *swaraj*.

The civil war and consequent partition of British India into the separate states of India and Pakistan was surely the worst period of Gandhi's life. He took partition as a verdict of failure: not that the principle of *satyagraha* had failed, but that he had fallen short in his practice of it. Yet it was then, when this verdict seemed so clear, that he proceeded to demonstrate for one last time the power of his method when tested in the midst of crisis. He reached for what he called his "ultimate weapon in his arsenal," the use of the fast.

The first striking aspect of Gandhi's fasts following independence is that he was now employing *satyagraha* not to combat alien rule, but rather against his own people, to bring them to their senses in the cause of peace. The next feature of his action is that, as an old man shaken to the core, he undertook

to resolve this monumental conflict in areas of violence such as he had never tested his method before. Much of northern India, from small villages to large urban areas, had plunged into civil, or what the Indians called communal, warfare, but no cities were worse than Calcutta and Delhi, and it was there that Gandhi chose to apply his remedy of nonviolence. Finally, even though Gandhi had long since established an international reputation as a renowned champion of peace, many prominent figures in India seriously doubted that his fasts could succeed. *The Statesman*, the leading newspaper of Calcutta, summed up the general skepticism by editorializing that Gandhi's action had no more possibility of bringing peace to the riot-torn city "than of curing a rabid dog of his madness by talking gently" (quoted in Dalton 2012, 150).

Gandhi chose for the site of his fast the home of a Calcutta Muslim friend, a widow who had lost family and property and now lived in a devastated dwelling. The eloquent inclusiveness in his desperate attempt was evident from the time he began his experiment with peace. Attacked by crowds who accused him of taking the cause of Muslims, Gandhi presented himself as a Hindu of Hindus, embodying a religion of tolerance and *ahimsa*. The mob's response was to throw bricks at him, and he very narrowly escaped serious injury. A volunteer squad of Muslim friends and admirers sprang to his rescue, surrounding him from further danger. But it was then, on the evening of September 1, 1947, thirteen months after the civil war had first commenced in Calcutta, twelve days after Indian independence, that Gandhi began his fast.

Gandhi's theory of fasting centered on the premise that it could function as a last resort to elicit the "better angels" in human nature and that the assumption that the "rabid dogs" of war need not prevail. Fasting for a public cause might, even when violence flared everywhere, spark a spirit of civic responsibility, making people pause and reflect, to realize that mutual slaughter was not in their own self-interests.

If ever a fast demonstrated the validity of each of these highly optimistic assumptions, then what historians call "the miracle of Calcutta" serves best. In only 72 hours of fasting, short by standards of many previous fasts, the people of this devastated city responded positively, and the same press that

had rejected Gandhi's methods, now proclaimed the fast an unqualified success. Equally remarkable, he was able to repeat his vindication of nonviolence four months later in Delhi when he again fasted for religious harmony. If there is a judgment of history on the ethics and efficacy of Gandhi's life thought, then the most favorable evidence comes from his use of the march, in his mass civil disobedience campaign of 1930, and of his two fasts for communal unity during the final five months of his life.

Summary of Gandhi's Core Values

Satyagraha was translated literally by Gandhi as truth-force, meaning the power that truth in politics could exercise. This interpretation of truth implied more than acting in a truthful or honest manner. It meant being true to the values of humanity, civility, humility, and nonviolence. When a leader conveys authenticity to a community, it is because he or she acts true to these values. From this action flows a kind of power and trust that can liberate both a self and a system. Freedom in this sense must involve equality because a free society cannot exist if even one person is enslaved. This connectedness resolves the classic problem of freedom versus equality as it does the question of how means relate to ends. When Gandhi wrote in his first treatise titled *Hind Swaraj* ([1909] 1997) that there is an inviolable connection between means and end, that people should never be treated as means but cherished for their sanctity and dignity, he asserted principles that resided at the magnetic center of his thought and experience.

Dennis Dalton

See also [Anarchism](#); [Apartheid](#); [Black Power](#); [Civil Disobedience](#); [Indian Political Thought](#); [King, Martin Luther, Jr.](#); [Modernization](#); [Nationalism](#); [Pacifism](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Ruskin, John](#); [Tolstoy, Leo](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Garibaldi, Giuseppe

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Garibaldi, Giuseppe

The Italian soldier and freedom fighter Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807–82) was born in Nice, France, in 1807 into a family of seafarers. He received little formal education, but was heavily influenced as a young man by Italian patriotic literature and poetry. In 1834, he became involved with Giuseppe Mazzini and his revolutionary organization, Giovane Italia, which had recently been created to work for the unification of Italy, and was sentenced to death for his part in a failed insurrection in Genoa. Forced into exile, he spent more than ten years in South America fighting on behalf of the republican rebels of the Rio Grande and Uruguay and gained an enormous reputation for fearlessness and military skill as commander of the red-shirted Italian Legion. With the outbreak of revolution in Europe in 1848, he returned to Italy and fought alongside the Piedmontese army against the Austrians. In the early summer of 1849, he orchestrated a brilliant defense of the Roman Republic against the besieging forces of the French army.

Garibaldi's achievements in South America and in Italy in 1848 to 1849, together with his romantic lifestyle, simplicity of character, and striking looks (which invited pictorial comparison with conventional images of Christ) gave him an enormous popular appeal, and during the 1850s (much of which he spent traveling in America and Asia before settling down in 1857 on the small island of Caprera off the northern coast of Sardinia), he was regarded by many Italian patriots as critical for winning mass support for the cause of Italian unity. Though his instincts were republican, his relations with Mazzini grew increasingly strained, and when war broke out

in the north of Italy against the Austrians in 1859, he offered his services to Victor Emmanuel II, King of Piedmont-Sardinia. He was given the rank of general and successfully commanded a corps of volunteers.

The abrupt end of the war and the cession by the Piedmontese Prime Minister Count Cavour of Nice to Emperor Napoleon III infuriated Garibaldi. In response to approaches from followers of Mazzini, he agreed to lead an expedition of a thousand volunteers to Sicily in an attempt to seize the initiative from Cavour and complete the unification of Italy. The campaign that he conducted in southern Italy between May and October 1860 was an extraordinary military and political feat and stirred the imagination of liberals and nationalists everywhere. It ended with the intervention of the Piedmontese army (which many saw as an attempt by Cavour to stop Garibaldi and his radical followers from reaching Rome) and the handing over of southern Italy by Garibaldi to Victor Emmanuel II. Italy, with the exception of Rome and Venice, was as a result unified under Piedmontese dominance.

Garibaldi quickly became disenchanted with the new Italian government, sensing that Cavour and his liberal followers had in reality been more interested in extending the power of Piedmont than in creating a truly unified new nation-state. He was especially angered by the way in which many of his followers in the campaign of 1860 were mistrusted by the new government and by the severely repressive policies pursued by Cavour in the south of the country. In April 1861, he entered parliament (an institution for which he had little regard—he preferred benevolent dictatorships), flamboyantly dressed in a South American poncho, and accused the prime minister of waging a civil war.

Garibaldi spent much of the last twenty years of his life away from Italian politics on his island of Caprera. He was increasingly racked by arthritis and general poor health. He made two abortive attempts to capture Rome—the first in 1862, which ended with his followers being fired upon by Italian forces on the slopes of Aspromonte in Calabria and himself receiving a serious bullet wound in the ankle, and the second in 1867, which was halted by French garrison troops. In 1870, he fought for the French Republic against Prussia. An international celebrity (the crowds that greeted him on a

visit to England in 1864 were unprecedented), he lent his name to many left-wing causes in the 1860s and 1870s, including that of international peace. He wrote no theoretical works, but his *Memoirs* (1872) consolidated his image as the quintessential romantic revolutionary. He died in 1882. In the decades after his death, he was extensively celebrated throughout Italy as a symbol of Italian unification and patriotism, and numerous statues and monuments were erected in his memory.

Christopher J. H. Duggan

See also [Italian Political Thought](#); [Nationalism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Revolution](#); [Romanticism](#)

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General Will

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General Will

Coined by French theologians, secularized by French political theorists, and appropriated by revolutionaries and counterrevolutionaries in the French Revolution, the phrase “general will” belongs unmistakably to Jean-Jacques Rousseau. For Rousseau, the general will was the most fundamental of the “principles of political right” referenced in the subtitle to *The Social Contract*, his most systematic work of political theory. Though it is a complex idea, Rousseau’s general will can be summarized as the set of decisions made by a sovereign body, composed of all persons subject to those decisions, with respect to their true interests, which are identical to the interests they hold in common. In other words, it is a true common good that all who understand their own legitimate interests would voluntarily will—thus, Rousseau’s choice of general will, rather than mere general or common good. Confusion about the exact meaning of Rousseau’s general will arises from his varying attributions in *The Social Contract* of sovereignty to the people, the majority, the common good, and even the general will itself.

Rousseau was drawn to the general will as a synthesis of republican virtue and personal liberty. It is a fraught term, presenting many theoretical challenges, but it is also a fertile term, as evinced by the debates it has inspired in democratic theory and practice since Rousseau made it famous.

The term general will originates in the writings of seventeenth-century French theologians such as Blaise Pascal and Nicholas Malebranche. Is

God's will general, they wondered, or does God make decisions on a case-by-case basis? On the one hand, according to St. Paul, God wills that "all men be saved"; on the other hand, according to influential, Jansenist doctrine, salvation depends on grace, conferred on some but not all: "Many are called but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14). The general will enabled seventeenth-century theologians to distinguish an antecedent general will that everyone be saved from a consequent particular will that only some will be.

In the eighteenth century, French political theorists secularized the general will, transforming it from a divine will into a political one. In this process, much was discarded, but the essential principle was preserved: legitimate power is deployed not on a case-by-case basis but in accordance with general laws. Charles-Louis Montesquieu emphasized the need for a general spirit in republican societies and assigned legislatures the job of expressing the general will of the state. Montesquieu's secularization of the general will applied only to application of laws, not to their formulation. Denis Diderot, a contemporary, colleague, and sometime friend of Rousseau, theorized a general will of humankind, a universal morality or sense of justice, which could govern not only the application but also the formulation of civil law. Unlike Montesquieu's formulation of the general will, which applied to particular societies, Diderot's was a universal will of humankind.

To Diderot's cosmopolitan sense of justice, Rousseau reacted adversely, arguing that it existed only in the minds of philosophers and could neither unite a people nor inspire civic action. Rousseau used the general will to capture his belief that sovereign power is legitimate only when it is based on a shared interest as opposed to an aggregation of particular wills, which he referred to as the will of all. This generality occurs, Rousseau argued, when two conditions are met: first, all citizens must participate in the formulation of the law, and second, they must do so on the basis of the set of interests they hold in common. The general will, therefore, has both a procedural and a substantive component. Not only must citizens participate, but their participation must also be enlightened.

A long history of criticism of Rousseau's general will stems from the possibility that, even under conditions of universal participation, the people could be mistaken about the general will, a point explicitly granted by Rousseau: "There is often a great difference between the will of all and the general will" (quoted in Ritter and Bondanella 1988, "On Social Contract," 100). Rousseau leaves no doubt that the general will is a special kind of common good, not a mere plebiscite: "What makes the will general is not so much the number of voters as the common interest uniting them" (quoted in Ritter and Bondanella 1988, 103). He addresses the possibility of a misguided majority in a way that leaves many critics dissatisfied. Admitting that his preference for direct democracy—with the people making all laws in person—has presupposed "that all the characteristics of the general will are still in the majority," he concludes that when they are not, "whatever side one takes, liberty no longer exists" (quoted in Ritter and Bondanella 1988, 151–52). Although mistakes will happen, he implies, it is better to go with the mistakes of a majority than with those of a minority. Unlike the Americans, or John Stuart Mill (*On Liberty*, 1859), Rousseau never considers the possibility of a Bill of Rights that would protect minorities and individuals from an errant majority.

This lack of legal protections, along with Rousseau's famous dictum that misguided individuals must be "forced to be free," has led critics such as J. L. Talmon ([1952] 1960) to accuse Rousseau of favoring "totalitarian democracy." Talmon and other critics argue that the general will risks being arrogated to an ostensibly enlightened elite, as during the French Revolution, when revolutionaries appealed to the general will to legitimize their harsh rule in the name of the people. Friendlier readers have invoked the general will as a heuristic for thinking about some of the most fundamental problems in political theory. John Rawls and Jürgen Habermas, for example, have drawn on the general will as a model of rational, equitable deliberation. Others, such as Richard Dagger and Philip Pettit, have invoked the general will in describing the importance of republican virtue to democratic politics. For those interested in the conditions for, constraints on, or outcomes of effective public deliberation, the general will continues to be a useful concept.

Jason Neidleman

See also [Contract Theory](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Equality and Egalitarianism](#); [French Political Thought](#); [French Revolution](#); [Political Thought of the](#); [Legitimacy](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Rawls, John](#); [Radicalism](#); [Revolution](#); [Rousseau, Jean-Jacques](#); [Separation of Powers](#); [State](#); [Theories of the](#)

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Manus I. Midlarsky Manus I. Midlarsky

Genocide

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Genocide

Since the 1994 Rwandan genocide and the more recent murderous events in Darfur, genocide has once again made its appearance on the world stage. The cry of “never again” after the Holocaust apparently fell on deaf ears. Because of the intimate connection between political events and the onset of genocide, political scientists have been increasingly concerned with its explanation.

Earlier Approaches

Initially, however, the preponderance of research in the field of genocide studies had been by professional historians, almost always on a single case of genocide, most frequently the Holocaust. Even the Holocaust, as by far the most extensive genocide of the twentieth century, had received very little attention from historians until the Eichmann trial in Israel and the virtually simultaneous publication of Raul Hilberg’s magisterial study of the Holocaust in the early 1960s. Only then, and with the gradual disappearance of the generation of Nazi perpetrators as well as the even more recent end of the Cold War, did historians, especially German ones, take a serious interest in the Holocaust. The passing of the survivors also has quickened the pace of Holocaust research, before their oral testimony and the writing of their memoirs will no longer be added to the store of evidence.

That literature emphasized explanations ranging from Adolf Hitler's intention to destroy Europe's Jews (the intentionalist approach) to a functionalist argument suggesting that once excluded from Europe's economy by the Nazis, the Jews became an economic burden that needed to be liquidated. More recently, the concept of redemptive anti-Semitism was developed by Saul Friedländer to help understand the Nazi need to kill incessantly and wantonly, even when it served no useful purpose.

Definitions and the Role of Democracy

When examining genocides beyond the Holocaust, the concept required a definition. Building on the sociologist Rafael Lemkin's earlier conception, the United Nations defined genocide as an act "committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or *in part*, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group" (UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide; emphasis added). Thus, any systematic slaughter, even if only a small part of a larger ethnoreligious body, constituted genocide. The 1995 mass murder of 8,000 Muslim males in Srebrenica, therefore, qualifies as a case of genocide. A more restrictive definition has been offered by Manus Midlarsky in which genocide is understood to be the state-sponsored systematic mass murder of innocent and helpless men, women, and children denoted by a particular ethnoreligious identity with the purpose of eradicating that group from a given territory. As a consequence, only more thoroughgoing mass murders such as the Holocaust and the eradication of the Armenians from the Ottoman Empire and the Tutsi from Rwanda are treated as genocides. These definitions lead to different research emphases, as is discussed later in this entry.

Among the first efforts at studying genocide beyond the Holocaust by the sociologist Leo Kuper yielded recognition that plural societies are most prone to genocidal activity. The role of political upheaval as a source of genocide, especially in the form of revolution, was then examined by the political scientist, Robert Melson. Both the Holocaust and the Armenian genocide of 1915 to 1916 were preceded by revolutions yielding respectively the Nazi and Young Turk governments.

Interstate war has been recognized as an antecedent of genocide by the sociologist Martin Shaw. And the role of civil war as a facilitator of genocide has been emphasized by the political scientist Matthew Krain. The anthropologist Alexander Hinton's study revealed that Pol Pot's genocidal activity in Cambodia was stimulated in part by both types of warfare. As a consequence of the search for a terrestrial utopia, genocide in four cases is the subject of work by the historian Eric Weitz. Strategic choice and the contingent nature of genocide as an ultimate outcome of societal conflict are emphasized respectively by the political scientists Benjamin Valentino and Scott Straus.

Studies using definitions influenced by that of the United Nations—the less restrictive approach—have yielded findings by the political scientist Barbara Harff, suggesting the role of political upheaval, extraconstitutional change, and civil and interstate war as progenitors of genocide. The importance of democracy as an inhibitor of genocide also emerged from these studies as has the role of immunity from external restraint as a facilitator of genocide.

However, focusing on the most extensive mass murders, yielding 66 to 70 percent death rates, have generated a somewhat different perspective on democracy. While fully realized stable democracy protects the citizens of the democratic state, it can be impervious to the needs of threatened populations in other states. Failures of the democratic governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand to permit more than a small number of Jewish refugees and expellees to find refuge in these democracies are salient cases in point. The U.S. immigration quotas for Germany and Austria were never even close to being filled during most of the period leading up to World War II. At the conference on immigration held at Evian-les-Bains in 1938, only the Dominican Republic, a thoroughgoing autocracy under Rafael Trujillo, agreed to accept European Jewish refugees. Without the need to defer to public opinion that might harbor anti-Semitic sentiments as in the Australian case (“As we have no real racial problem, we are not desirous of importing one” [quoted in Wyman 1985, 50]), autocracies could accept Jewish immigrants.

The reluctance of President Bill Clinton to intervene militarily or even support UN intervention in the 1994 Rwandan genocide stemmed from such considerations. Desirous of being reelected in 1996 and having witnessed the negative reaction of the American public to the deaths of American marines in Somalia in 1993, he was strongly averse to another intervention on the African continent. A cynical realpolitik is manifested in which state requirements, as interpreted by the democratic leader, trump the humanitarian needs of noncitizens. Thus, despite the inhibiting effect of democracy, Native Americans were subject to extensive mass killing during the formative period of the United States.

Indeed democratization as a process may be considered as another source of genocidal activity. Revolutionary regimes such as Nazi Germany rose to power as the result of an incomplete democratization in which even the legitimacy of democratic procedures is questioned as in the Weimar Republic. Rwanda, too, was in the process of an incipient democratization, as was the Ottoman Empire prior to their respective genocides.

The Importance of Loss

Loss, especially territorial loss (or the expectation of its imminent occurrence), was found by Midlarsky to be critically important in the onset of the Holocaust and the Armenian and Rwandan genocides. It also was found in the cases of the mass murders of Muslim males in Srebrenica in 1995 and of ethnic Vietnamese in Cambodia during the murderous rampage of the Khmer Rouge during 1975 to 1979. These findings suggest that a focus on the most thoroughgoing genocides can yield explanations of other cases of systematic mass slaughter, whether or not they are defined as genocide.

At least five analytically distinct perspectives inform the consequences of loss. First, as socioeconomic space contracts, the presence of considerable numbers of refugees may lead to an emotional reaction that in turn can result in brutality or even murder. This conclusion is based on recent findings that decisions having moral import are far more likely to be based on emotional reactions than on reasoned deliberation. Identification with the downtrodden because of ethnoreligious commonality may lead to brutal

actions against those, often of a different ethnicity, who are perceived to be at fault in generating the refugee influx.

Additional evidence is found in studies indicating that anger, in contrast to sadness or a neutral emotion, increases the probability of negative reactions to people of a different ethnicity. External threat can stimulate anger, which in turn is most frequently directed against members of a group different from one's own.

Second, the placing of blame for perceived or actual injury to ethnoreligious kin suggests that revenge—a kind of loss compensation—can be exacted. And recent neural findings by Brian Knutson indicate that the experience of actual or anticipated revenge activates regions of the brain associated with feeling good. Thus, revenge can be pleasurable.

Third, if those perceived to be at fault also arrive as refugees or are viewed as comfortable and wealthy, they can be targeted for massacre or ultimately genocide. The intersection of migration, ethnoreligious identity, and social class is combustible. Refugees sharpen an existential contrast with the other; Jews as the anti-German, Armenians as the anti-Turk, or Tutsi as the anti-Hutu, especially if the victims are, on the whole, wealthier and/or more visible than the majority. Competing for the same resources in a shrunken environment, refugees and native populations can come to see each other as inevitable opponents in a contracting socioeconomic space.

Fourth, according to the social psychologists Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, prospect theory also tells us that losses are valued more highly than gains. Experimental evidence has consistently demonstrated the asymmetry between losses and gains, even to the extent that in contrast to gains, losses can generate extreme responses. Losses as the result of a shrinking spatial environment, therefore, may have a magnified role in the public consciousness out of all proportion to the real-world consequences of loss. Again, brutality may be justified in the mind of the observer.

Fifth, the importance of territoriality in its own right should not be minimized, especially if the presence of refugees serves as a continual reminder of the territorial loss. Territory is so fundamental to state security that massive brutalities may be justified in the name of the state. According

to the political scientist John Vasquez, when compared with general foreign policy disputes and those involving contrasting regime types, territorial disputes have a higher probability of escalating to war than either. This tendency suggests the fundamental importance of territoriality, even in comparison with other issues that are typically thought to be critical in fomenting conflict.

A contributing element to the importance of territoriality stems from the signaling of state weakness associated with territorial loss in time of war. Territory can be used to protect the state as in a buffer zone between the state core and its enemies. When that territory is lost, state weakness can be perceived by both defenders of the state and its external opponents. Under certain conditions, that weakness can lead to elimination of internal enemies to buttress the newly vulnerable state.

In each of the cases of genocide discussed in this entry, the socioeconomic space was contracted. By socioeconomic space, I mean the context within which groups live their lives spatially (meaning physical territory), economically, and in their hierarchical relations with each other. This shrinkage, especially if it occurs on all three dimensions, is the single most important long-term progenitor of genocide.

In two of the cases of genocide—Germany and the Ottoman Empire—the empires were contracted as the result of defeats in war. German territorial loss in World War I was not confined to relatively small colonial areas (relative to the British and French holdings), principally in Africa, or former Polish lands in the east. At the time of the armistice, Germany was still occupying large swaths of territory in Belgium and in France, and especially in Russia. By the start of World War I in 1914, the Ottoman Empire had already experienced a contraction beginning in 1774. Economic catastrophe, as in the disasters of post–World War I German inflation, or the extreme indebtedness of the Ottoman state, was an important factor that further magnified that insecurity. In the third case, Rwanda, state insecurity was amplified by ongoing conflict that began with the virtual inception of the modern state, followed by territorial losses to the invading Rwandese Patriotic Front after 1990, and entailed serious economic weakness as well. Further, the recent Hutu political dominance over the Tutsi was threatening

to revert to the earlier, more enduring governance of Hutu by Tutsi. If political subordination exists prior to societal gains that preceded the recent losses, then political extremism and mass violence are more probable.

In addition to these principal cases, there exists variation in genocidal behavior by Germany's allies in World War II. Midlarsky found that while Vichy France, Romania, and Italy experienced territorial losses at some point during the war and thereafter commenced their collaboration with the Nazi genocide of Jews, Bulgaria and Finland gained territory and saved all of their Jewish citizens from the Holocaust.

Genocide of the Vietnamese in Cambodia accelerated rapidly as the Khmer Rouge was being decisively defeated in the quickening border war with Vietnam. So, too, was the genocide of Muslim males at Srebrenica made far more probable by recognition of the impending nearly certain loss of the krajina by Bosnian Serbs such as Ratko Mladi, former commander of the Serb garrison at Knin in the krajina and later the officer in charge of the genocide at Srebrenica.

Genocide Prevention

Lost territory or the threat of its imminent occurrence is an important early warning indicator. The experience of loss and the importance of loss compensation (a form of revenge) in effecting genocide suggest a potential preventive measure. Instead of loss compensation taking the form of genocide, as it has in the three principal cases (and in the instances of Srebrenica and the ethnic Vietnamese in Cambodia, as well as German allies during World War II), it can be introduced much earlier in relations between states or communities, as it was not in the case of Germany after World War I, yielding an important source of Nazi support. Equally to the point, the Sudanese government's fear of the future secession of its southern territories as the result of the 2002 to 2005 Naivasha Accords signaled that crimes against humanity, even genocide as loss compensation, could occur in Darfur, another dissident region of Sudan. International institutions, not limited to criminal tribunals, could identify potential victimizers even before the onset of genocide and engage them in efforts to peacefully compensate them for their past losses or those of the near future.

Manus I. Midlarsky

See also [Arendt, Hannah](#); [Darwinism and Social Darwinism](#); [Ethnicity and Political Thought](#); [Mass Society](#); [Modernization](#); [Multiculturalism](#); [Race and Racism](#); [Totalitarianism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [United Nations](#); [Theories of the](#)

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George, Henry

George, Henry

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George, Henry

Henry George was born in Philadelphia on September 2, 1839, and died in New York in October 29, 1897, having spent most of his early life in San Francisco. A chance visit to New York drew his attention to its extremes of wealth and poverty, which did not exist in California. He then set about searching for an explanation.

Back in California in 1869, he witnessed the coming of the railroad, and from this change, he drew the conclusion that the progress of population and industry tended to be absorbed by rising land prices, leaving ordinary people little better off.

That conclusion drew him to the study of the classical economists. The result was *Progress and Poverty* ([1879] 2005). In this book, George rejected the explanations of poverty given by Thomas Malthus, by which the tendency toward over-population always brought wages down to the subsistence level, as well as the wages-fund theory, which assumed that only a fixed sum was available to pay wages at any given point. Instead, to explain poverty in an industrial society, he adopted and developed the Ricardian concept of rent. He argued that if rent continued to be appropriated privately, a growing gap would develop between those who owned valuable land (in which he included resources) and the rest of society. This relative poverty, if unchecked, would in time become absolute poverty in which real wages or the purchasing power of most would decline.

Progress and Poverty also aimed to explain recurring economic depressions (recessions). George argued that, while other causes undoubtedly existed, their initiatory cause was speculation in land, which always followed expanding economic activity. The ever-larger returns to one factor of production, land, was at the expense of labor (in which he included capital as stored labor used to produce more wealth). The resulting discouragement to production manifested first in lagging new construction (in houses and factories). This failure of supply then initiated a failure of demand in a widening vicious cycle. The news of this failure of the economy to expand brought speculation to a sudden halt, leaving many with large interest payments that could not be discharged by the further sale of property. The rapid spread of indebtedness brought a paralysis of credit and severe social disturbance in the form of mounting unemployment, bankruptcies, and foreclosures. The resulting fall in wages, interest, and rents prepared the way for recovery, and the process began all over again.

George's basic philosophic and economic principles, which are set out concisely in Part I, Chapters 4 and 5 of *A Perplexed Philosopher* (1892), are developed from John Locke, Thomas Jefferson, and David Ricardo. Following Locke and Ricardo, George argued that exchange (or market) value came from the input of labor. Land itself, being unproduced, was not wealth and without cost. Rent or land value represented the excess return to the same application of labor and capital due to a superior location. The price of a good was set by its marginal production where production was most difficult. Rent arose on better sites where production (in which George included distribution) was easier. In other words, value lay not in land but in its location or surroundings. Thus, it was a value produced not by the landholder but by the community.

From Jefferson, George drew the concept of natural rights and natural law. The right to use land, he argued, was a natural right, stemming from human need, a right that existed before government. It was a right limited only by the equal right of others, and it was a primary duty of government to guarantee this equal right. In the case of land possessed privately, this equal right could be achieved by a single tax on rent. Rent taken as public revenue would reduce the private value of all land to the same level, to that of marginal or rentless land. Social problems for George came solely from the

denial of the natural rights to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” and might only be resolved by their restoration.

In the book *Social Problems* ([1883] 1966), George argued that natural monopolies (where competition was impossible) lay properly within the sphere of government. The supply of water, electricity, telecommunications, roads, and public transportation at least cost to the users would enhance the value of adjacent land so that their cost could be recouped from the public collection of rent.

The proposal for the abolition of all forms of taxation in favor of rent collection won George an international reputation, and *Progress and Poverty* sold over two and a half million copies in its first twenty-five years of publication, making it easily the most widely circulating book on economics in history.

Its message was essentially an argument for free trade and an attack on monopoly, especially land (value) monopoly. Markets in labor and capital could only operate optimally if the land market were freed from the private ownership of rent.

In the latter part of *Progress and Poverty*, George prophesied that, if this were not done, progress would revert to barbarism brought about by increasing social inequality.

Richard Lawrence Giles

See also [American Political Thought](#); [Capitalism](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Jefferson, Thomas](#); [Malthus, Thomas Robert](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Physiocracy](#); [Progress](#); [Property](#); [Theories of](#); [Radicalism](#); [Republicanism](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Utopianism](#)

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Wolfgang Rother Wolfgang Rother

German Enlightenment

German enlightenment

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German Enlightenment

The most important German Enlightenment thinker was undoubtedly Immanuel Kant (1724–1804). In his essay *Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?* (An Answer to the Question: What Is Enlightenment? 1784), he defined Enlightenment as “the human being’s emergence from his self-incurred minority.” In this sense, Enlightenment aimed at the autonomy of the rational subject—in political terms, at freedom to be understood as the freedom to make public use of one’s reason. Kant’s definition implied not only a philosophical claim, but also an essentially political one, which was realized in human beings’ real liberation from political tutelage and dependence—in historical terms, in the French Revolution or in a comprehensive sense: in the free self-regulation of all political and economic processes.

Natural Law, Reform Absolutism, Political Eudaemonism

Enlightenment as a discourse of political philosophy with the intention of justifying and criticizing social and political realities continued in the tradition of natural law, which at the end of the seventeenth century replaced the Aristotelian-Scholastic triad of ethics, economics, and politics within the academic canon of disciplines. Thanks to the influence of

Christian Thomasius (1655–1728) and Christian Wolff (1679–1754) natural law assumed the leading role in practical philosophy.

Protestant Enlightenment

The contribution of Wolffian scholasticism to Protestant natural law consisted in popularizing and systematizing a jurisprudence based on philosophy and in establishing a conceptually precise terminology. Paradigmatic in this respect was the *Systema elementare universae iurisprudentiae naturalis* (Elementary System of the Universal Natural Jurisprudence, 1749) of Wolff's disciple Daniel Nettelbladt (1719–91), who taught for nearly fifty years at the University of Halle. Aside from pure imitation of his master, Nettelbladt also developed teachings that differed in nuances from those of Wolff, implying concepts of civil freedom, the principle of separation of powers, and even the theory of the right of resistance. This thread was taken up by Gottfried Achenwall (1719–72), who taught at the Göttingen Faculties of Law and Philosophy. In his *Elementa iuris naturae in usum auditorum* (Elements of Natural Law for the Use by His Auditors, 1750), he anticipated Kant's practical imperative as the base of inalienable human rights, and he developed libertarian conceptions of government. The *Elementa*, which appeared in eight editions, were among the most influential handbooks of political philosophy in the second half of the eighteenth century; many natural law teachers relied on this work and even Kant used it for his lectures. Disengagement from Wolff was articulated specifically in Achenwall's empirical politics on the basis of statistical methods, developed in his *Abriß der neuesten Staatswissenschaft* (Compendium of the Newest Political Science, 1749). The most remarkable exponent of Protestant natural law was the Marburg philosopher Hermann Friedrich Kahrel (1719–87). In his *Das Recht der Natur* (The Law of Nature, 1746), he developed a conception of civil liberties and rights and above all, anticipated the essential ideas of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's contractualism, which in his *Völcker-Recht* (Law of Nations, 1750), he applied to the great world government.

Catholic Enlightenment

The Catholic Enlightenment thinkers developed their own conceptions of political philosophy, providing each in their own way answers to the prevailing political challenges. Johann Adam von Ickstatt (1702–71), who had attended Wolff's lectures in Marburg and who became the leading Enlightenment figure in Franconia and Bavaria, introduced Wolffianism into the curricula of the universities of Würzburg and Ingolstadt. In his *Oratio de eurhythmia politica* (Oration on Political Eurhythmic, 1736), he developed a eurhythmic conception of government, the central idea of which was harmony, comprising religious, moral, economic, and legal uniformity. Ickstatt's political thinking was joined to a manifest affection for Protestantism. His *Untersuchung der Frage: Warum ist der Wohlstand der protestantischen Länder so gar viel größer als der catholischen?* (An Examination of the Question: Why is the Wealth of Protestant Countries so Much Greater Compared with the Catholic Ones? 1772) saw the main reason for the prosperity of the Protestant territories in the absence of monasteries: this avoided tying up capital, allowed money to remain in circulation, and resulted in an increase in population and wealth. A similar position was advocated by Karl Anton von Martini (1726–1800), professor of natural law in Vienna, tutor at the imperial court, and statesman, in his *Lehrbegriff des Natur- Staats- und Völkerrechts* (Theory of Natural, National and International Law, 4 vols., 1783–84). He is generally regarded as a theorist of Josephinism—that is, he pleaded for far-reaching rights of regents in religious matters and for the absolute primacy of civil authorities: ecclesiastical property was to be the property of the government, and clergymen were to be the government's subjects. He supported the idea of a civil religion, criticized external constraints in religious matters, and argued for an unrestricted freedom of conscience. One of the most dazzling but also dubious personages of the German Enlightenment was Adam Weishaupt (1748–1830), founder of the Order of Illuminati. Inspired by Wolff's moral and political ideas and by the French Enlightenment thinkers, Weishaupt pursued the goals of morally perfecting humans by means of an educational program and by social and political reforms promoted by the Illuminati through their infiltration of governments.

Reform Absolutism and Empire Patriotism

The advocates of reform absolutism developed programs for preventing a revolution. They agreed with many natural-law thinkers, but unlike those academic theorists, they were statesmen in princely services: Friedrich Carl von Moser (1723–98) was minister of the Landgrave (Count) of Hessen-Darmstadt; the popular philosopher Thomas Abbt (1738–66) gave up his academic career in favor of employment at the Court of Schaumburg-Lippe; and Johann Georg Schlosser (1739–99) realized reform projects as the chief official of a county in southwest Germany.

Moser developed his conception of political reform in his *Ueber Regenten, Regierung und Ministers* (On Regents, Government, and Ministers, 1784). At first sight, his patriotic idea of freedom in his *Von dem deutschen national-Geist* (On German National Spirit, 1765) and in his *Patriotische Briefe* (Patriotic Letters, 1767) seems to disagree with the clear preference he voiced for a monarchy by the grace of God. Monarchy was perceived, however, as a constitutional government whose purpose consisted in the guarantee of freedom. He supported a civil and libertarian constitutional patriotism that also included cosmopolitanism, and he clearly disapproved of any doctrine of racial blood and soil. He differed from Abbt, who in his *Vom Tode für das Vaterland* (On Death for the Fatherland, 1761) advocated an irrational and heroically idealized patriotism along with reverence for the person of the absolute monarch. However, Abbt repudiated this antirepublicanism in his later treatise *Vom Verdienste* (On Merit, 1765) by introducing merit as a moral and political category of republican thinking. Schlosser was in many respects congenial to Moser. The pillars of his idea of civil society, developed for example in his *Vorschlag und Versuch einer Verbesserung des deutschen bürgerlichen Rechts* (Proposal for and Attempt at the Improvement of German Civil Law, 1777) or in his *Briefe über die Gesetzgebung* (Letters on Legislation, 1789), are freedom, human rights, the reign of law, and a hedonistic eudaemonism.

Political Eudaemonism

Eudaemonism was a phenomenon of Enlightenment political philosophy that detached from natural law arguments and found its theoretical grounding in the so-called police science (*Polizeywissenschaft*). Its subject matter was the internal order of the polity, and it comprised the practice of

state administration, social politics, and economics as well as the surveillance of education, morals, and religion. These theoretical systems of police and cameral sciences presupposed an absolutistic government, and they developed comprehensive programs of modernization “from above,” based on a eudaemonistic theory of the purpose of government. They included suggestions for promoting the growth of population and wealth as well as projects of public welfare. In a process of increasing theoretical differentiation, police and cameral sciences became detached from philosophical discourse and turned into special programs of applied social, economic, and financial politics. They concentrated on offering practical advice on agriculture, forestry, mining, and technologies of industrial production in manufactures and factories, while their theoretical substance hardly ever went beyond the basics of business, household, and accountancy. Political philosophy thus degenerated into moralizing cameral instruction, becoming confined to well-meaning admonitions to observe the cameral virtues of probity, loyalty, diligence, orderliness, and cautiousness.

The Berlin Protestant Minister Johann Peter Süßmilch (1708–67), who was influenced by John Graunt (*Natural and Political Observations Made upon the Bills of Mortality*, 1662), William Petty (*Political Arithmetic*, 1690), and William Derham (*Physico-Theology*, 1713), developed a physicotheologically based theory of population that was supposed to serve—together with his empirical method of demographic statistics—as an instrument of welfare politics. His main work was *Die göttliche Ordnung* (The Divine Order). Süßmilch spent much of the period between the first edition of the book (1741 in one volume) and the second one (1765–76 in three volumes) on carrying out thorough research. This research led not only to an enormous increase in the size of the book, but also to a new theoretical orientation: the theodicy of 1741 mutated into a political and economic work based on empirical data of astonishing completeness. Süßmilch maintained a theory of population growth that found a pendant in the theory of state expansion such as it was advanced by the Berlin Police Director Johann Albrecht Philippi (1721–91) in his *Die wahren Mittel zur Vergrößerung eines Staats* (The True Means for the Enlargement of the State, 1753) and *Der Vergrößerte Staat* (The Enlarged State, 1759); both works argued for an absolutistic police and welfare state. The climax of German police sciences is represented by Johann Heinrich Gottlieb von

Justi (1717–71), who ultimately became chief inspector of the Prussian mines and steel industry and by Joseph von Sonnenfels (1733–1817), professor of police and cameral sciences at Vienna—a fruit of his teaching was, among other books, his *Sätze aus der Polizey, Handlungs- und Finanz-Wissenschaft* (Principles of Police, Trade and Finance Science, 3 vols., 1765–76, with eight editions)—and political counselor of Empress Maria Theresa. Justi developed in his numerous writings, for example, in his *Die Grundfeste zu der Macht und Glückseeligkeit der Staaten; oder ausführliche Vorstellung der gesamten Policey-Wissenschaft* (The Groundwork for the Power and Happiness of Countries; or an Ample Presentation of the Entire Police Science, 2 vols., 1760–61), a comprehensive system of political science based on a eudaemonistic theory of the purpose of government. He supported moderately libertarian ideas of government and economics: while the government may continue to superintend the political and financial system, it should allow for the sake of public welfare a far-reaching freedom of trade. Sonnenfels dissociated himself from Justi's eudaemonism and advanced the system of a police government that would guarantee security and an efficient administration; his conception, though sometimes tending to totalitarianism, included a comprehensive program of social politics.

Kant

Dignity of Man, Human Rights, and Civilization

The fundamental notion of Kant's political philosophy, which he developed in his *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* (Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals, 1785), his *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* (Critique of Practical Reason, 1788), and his *Metaphysik der Sitten* (The Metaphysics of Morals, 1797), was his ban on the instrumental use of a human being. This absolute interdiction was derived from the practical imperative: a person must never become an object or a means to an end. A human being is rather an end in itself, the subject of moral law through the autonomy of his will. The basis of human rights is the prejudicial idea of the dignity of humans. In his *Muthmaßlicher Anfang der Menschengeschichte* (Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History, 1786), Kant discussed

the intrinsic contradiction of humankind—that is, the conflict between its genus as animals and its true destination as a moral genus. However, as the civil man always remains a natural one, mankind runs the risk of falling back into barbarism. Nature gave us freedom—natural freedom, but at the same time, nature gave us reason to civilize freedom through autonomous legislation and to secure it on the level of morality. The autonomous act of legislation generated civil law and thus constitutional government as the guarantor of the human right of freedom. The genesis of civil freedom was for Kant a historical process in which human beings rise above the roughness of their natural disposition.

Freedom, Happiness, and Equality

In his *Über den Gemeinspruch: Das mag in der Theorie richtig sein, taugt aber nicht für die Praxis* (On the Common Saying: That May be Correct in Theory, But It Is of No Use in Practice, 1793), Kant criticized Thomas Hobbes's contract of subjection, contrasting it with Rousseau's theory of social contract conceived as a contract of civil union. The purpose of this latter contract is freedom, which is the only true subject matter of human right. This right is a priori; it precedes every empirical purpose so that the happiness everybody is striving for does not belong to the fundamental rights. The contradiction between original freedom and law—to be understood as a limitation of individual freedom so that it agrees with the freedom of all citizens—can be resolved by an argument of reason: reason wishes the social contract. Thus, human rights are principles a priori on which civil society and constitutional government are founded. Kant's essential idea is the a priori nature of human rights; these are not laws enacted by the government but pure principles of reason that may then serve as the basis for constitutional rule. So human rights conceived as the law of reason form the condition of the possibility of constituting civil society as well as—in its function as an authority respected by reason—the condition of the possibility of conserving it and protecting it from relapsing into barbarism and arbitrary rule.

Freedom is the fundamental a priori right of humans. The striving for happiness cannot be brought under an a priori principle in the same way as freedom of the will so that the definition of happiness is left to free

discretion. Nobody can compel me to be happy, but everybody is free to pursue their happiness in any way they desire, as long as they do not infringe on another person's freedom. Kant rejected the view that happiness could be the purpose of government because this would conflict with the fundamental right of freedom. A government prescribing to its subjects how they should be happy would be treating them as minors, a treatment that implied for Kant the worst kind of despotism.

Human beings as subjects are equal under law. Nobody can force another person to any action except by means of public law. Therefore, the principle of equality conceived as an a priori one is not contradicted by factual inequality, for instance, in physical or intellectual abilities or in wealth. The inalienability of equality and of freedom implies that neither equality nor freedom can ever be abolished by contract. Humans can only break away from this legal constitution by criminal, illegal action—that is, they are free to lose their freedom only by abusing it.

Cosmopolitan Law

In his *Zum ewigen Frieden* (Toward Perpetual Peace, 1795), Kant reflected on the universal validity of human rights in a globalized world. In regard to the final aim of perpetual peace, he pleaded for extending human rights into cosmopolitan law. He thus marked the culminating point of a process that started with the pregovernment claims of modern natural law and that led to the universal postgovernment claims of human rights. The idea that peace cannot be realized without human rights is the result of Enlightenment debates on natural law and human rights. The latter form the legitimating base of modern government as a civil and constitutional one and of the maxim of global law and justice.

The Post-Kantian and Post-Revolutionary Era

The French Revolution as well as the revolution of ideas that emerged as a response to the critical philosophy of Kant undoubtedly exerted a strong influence on political thinking and led to a new conception of natural law. This historical break is reflected in the historiographic distinction between

the so-called earlier and later natural law. The earlier natural law was the political theory of absolutism and stood in the tradition of Samuel Pufendorf, Christian Thomasius, and Christian Wolff. It was based on a normatively, theologically, morally, rationally, historically, or empirically based concept of human nature, while the later, Kantian natural law started from legal concepts a priori and presupposed only man's autonomy, thus setting the ground for political libertarianism.

Freedom, Republicanism, Empirical Politics

In his *StatsGelartheit* (Teachings on Government, 2 vols., 1793–1804), August Ludwig Schlözer (1735–1809), professor at Göttingen, established politics as an independent discipline, which in clear opposition to Wolff, he detached from natural law. The latter was to be replaced by a so-called metapolitics that comprised philosophical reflection on the elements of politics as well as arguments for universal human rights, which explicitly included the equality of men and women. Ernst Ferdinand Klein (1744–1810), professor of law at Halle and later the Prussian minister of justice, was strongly influenced by Kant. Klein criticized Wolff's moral foundation of natural law and his political eudaemonism; instead, freedom was to be the starting point of an argument that included a detailed discussion of the relation between freedom and property (*Freyheit und Eigenthum*, Freedom and Property, 1790). Christian Ulrich Detlev Freiherr von Eggers (1758–1813), who was employed by the Danish Crown and who for several years taught politics and economics at Copenhagen, relied in his *Lehrbuch des Natur- und allgemeinen Privatrechts und gemeinen Preussischen Rechts* (Textbook of Natural and General Private Law and Common Prussian Law, 4 vols., 1797) likewise on Wolff and Kant. He downplayed the sharp antagonism between the two notions of the purpose of government as the promotion of happiness or as the promotion of freedom and advanced a theory in which both concepts were conceived—together with enlightenment and perfection—in a mutual and dialectical relationship. He developed his political philosophy within a conception of history as a history of the progress of freedom. Traces of the same Wolff-Kantian eclecticism are to be found in Gottlieb Hufeland (1760–1817), professor in Jena and Würzburg. With his *Versuch über den Grundsatz des Naturrechts* (Essay on the Principle of Natural Law, 1785) and his *Lehrsätze des*

Naturrechts (Theorems of Natural Law, 1790), he was not only one of the earliest, but also one of the most influential law theorists inspired by Kant. The categorical imperative as a formal principle is flanked by Wolff's imperative of perfection as a material principle. Influenced by Kant and Johann Gottlieb Fichte and rejecting the earlier, empirically based natural law, Johann Christian Gottlieb Schaumann (1768–1821), professor of philosophy at Gießen, deduced natural law—starting with the self that posits itself—from pure reason. In his *Wissenschaftliches Naturrecht* (Scientific Natural Law, 1792), his *Versuch über Aufklärung, Freyheit und Gleichheit* (Essay on Enlightenment, Freedom, and Equality, 1793), his *Kritische Abhandlungen zur philosophischen Rechtslehre* (Critical Treatises on the Philosophical Doctrine of Law, 1795), and his *Versuch eines neuen Systems des natürlichen Rechts* (Essay of a New System of Natural Law, 1796), he worked out his arguments for human rights and for republicanism, but he categorically rejected revolution. He was the founder of criminal psychology (*Ideen zu einer Kriminalpsychologie*, Ideas for a Criminal Psychology, 1792); he claimed that women should be judged only by women, and he argued against Kant's support of the death penalty.

This position connected him with the author of best sellers Johann Adam Bergk (1769–1834)—such as Schaumann a Kantian, an opponent of the death penalty, and a proponent of the legal equality of women. In his *Untersuchungen aus dem Natur- Staats- und Völkerrechte* (Examinations of Natural, National, and International Law, 1796) and his *Philopatros: Entwurf zu einer Verfassung für das teutsche Reich* (Philopatros: An Outline of a Constitution for the German Empire, 1796), Bergk argued for an uncompromising republicanism. In a subtle critique of Kant's arguments against the right of resistance (*Briefe über Immanuel Kant's Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Rechtslehre*, Letters on Immanuel Kant's Metaphysical First Principles of the Doctrine of Law, 1797), he attempted to prove that revolutions were democratically justified.

Conservatism

Conservatism was not only a prerevolutionary, but also a postrevolutionary phenomenon of German Enlightenment political theory. A representative of the former was Justus Möser (1720–94), who as the guardian of the minor

Frederic Duke of York (1763–1827) governed the city-state of Osnabrück for nearly twenty years. He maintained an anti-civil, anti-republican, and anti-libertarian conservatism, the background of which formed the apology of early medieval feudal society. He made the capability of entering into social contract dependent on land property (*Der Bauerhof als eine Aktie betrachtet*, The Farm Considered as Stock, 1774), and he argued for a differentiated hierarchal model of government and society that he illustrated with the metaphor of a pyramid (*Der Staat mit einer Pyramide verglichen*, Society Compared with a Pyramid, 1773). Later, conservatism was distinguished by a strict rejection of the French Revolution—its theoretical foundation, political claims, and historical consequences. Typical of the postrevolutionary conservatism was the Leipzig professor of philosophy Georg Niklaus Brehm (1753–1811), author of *Über den politischen Naturalismus* (On Political Naturalism, 1793) and *Über die natürliche Gleichheit der Menschen* (On the Natural Equality of Men, 1794). On the level of the revolutionary arguments for human and civil rights, Brehm pointed out the antagonism between the claims for equality and for freedom. His critique of a naturalistically distorted egalitarianism argued from the standpoint of the normative authority of positive law. Revolution would lead to the dissolution of the natural and reasonable order, to chaos and anarchy, to a relapse into a prelegal state of the war of all against all.

Political Economy

Eighteenth-century political economy had its theoretical roots in early modern natural law: the subject matters of self-conservation and freedom were economically specified. The absolutistic phenomenon of political eudaemonism obviously disagreed with natural-law claims for freedom: in practice, it amounted to a governmental technique for making its subjects happy by means of extensive authoritarian welfare politics that kept the people on a leash, and it included far-reaching interventions in social and economic processes. These practices were countered by libertarian political economics. However, although Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* was immediately translated by Johann Friedrich Schiller (*Untersuchung der Natur und Ursachen von Nationalreichthümern*, I-II, 1776–77) and later by Christian Garve (*Untersuchung über die Natur und die Ursachen des Nationalreichthums*, I-II, 1794–96), libertarian notions could not easily

prevail against the predominant police and cameral conceptions such as those advanced by Justi or Sonnenfels. The lane on which Smith would invade Germany had been undoubtedly paved by Kant—the affinity between moral autonomy and libertarian economics is evident.

One of the earliest German readers of Smith was Johann Friedrich von Pfeiffer (1718–87), who can also be considered as one of his forerunners. Pfeiffer was a high Prussian official who later failed as an entrepreneur of coke production and starch fabrication before being appointed professor of cameral sciences at Mainz. Notwithstanding Pfeiffer’s obvious sympathy for Smith, his economic thinking was also marked by a receptiveness toward theories advocating a planned economy in the sense of an absolutistic eudaemonism (*Grundsätze der Universal-Cameral-Wissenschaft*, Principles of the Universal Cameral Science, 1783). A precursor to economic libertarianism was physiocracy—in Germany propounded by Johann August Schlettwein (1731–1802), who was involved in political and economic reforms in southwestern Germany before becoming professor at the newly founded Faculty of Economics at Gießen. His major works were *Die wichtigste Angelegenheit für das ganze Publicum: oder die natürliche Ordnung in der Politik* (The Most Important Matter for the Whole Public: or the Natural Order in Politics, 2 vols., 1772–73) and *Grundfeste der Staaten oder die politische Oekonomie* (Groundwork of the States or Political Economy, 1779). The best known German followers of Smith were—besides August Ferdinand Lueder (1760–1819), professor in Brunswick and Göttingen and author of *Ueber Nationalindustrie und Staatswirthschaft* (On National Industry and Public Economics, 3 vols., 1800–04)—Georg Sartorius (1765–1828) in Göttingen and Christian Jakob Kraus (1753–1807) in Königsberg, who both adhered to Smith very closely, as well as the above mentioned Kantian Gottlieb Hufeland. The affinity between Smith and Kant is manifest in the transcendental economics of the Heidelberg professor Johann Adam Völlingers (1756–99). He developed an economics that claimed to be a priori and that was conceived as a “daughter science” of Kant’s critical philosophy. In his *Grundriß einer Allgemeinen kritisch-philosophischen Wirtschafts-Lehre* (Outline of a General Critical Philosophical Doctrine of Economics, 1796), he started with the question how economics as a science was possible and then deduced the concept of economy from need.

Christian Daniel Voß (1761–1821), who taught at Halle, was also influenced both by Kant's philosophy and by Smith's economics. In his *Handbuch der allgemeinen Staatswissenschaft* (Handbook of the General Political Science, 6 vols., 1796–1802), which comprised more than 3,000 pages, he embedded economics in a comprehensive system of political philosophy. His libertarian conception advocated a system of free trade and industry based on the notion of a restless human mind striving constantly for advancement and progress. The main requirements for economic growth and increase of national wealth were the free exercise of one's will and the free development of productive powers. Governmental compulsion, artificial steering, and supporting measures would hinder economic development.

Wolfgang Rother

See also [Conservatism](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Fichte, Johann Gottlieb](#); [French Revolution, Political Thought of the](#); [German Political Thought](#); [Kant, Immanuel](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Natural Law](#); [Physiocracy](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Scottish Enlightenment](#); [Smith, Adam](#); [State, Theories of the](#)

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German Political Thought

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German Political Thought

This entry is an attempt to elucidate the main lineages of post-1789 political reflection in Germany by identifying influential theories in terms of their position within a left-right spectrum of political opinion. It aims to account for the dominant patterns of political argument that broadly characterize German liberalism, German conservatism, and German radicalism.

German Liberalism

At the origins of the development of liberal thought in Germany stands the practical philosophy of Immanuel Kant. Kant's mature political thought was formulated as a response to the revolutionary transformation of France between 1789 and 1795. It endorsed the basic constructs of political legitimacy that influenced the French Revolution, and it reflected in a cautiously affirmative manner on the achievements of the revolution itself. Proceeding from a rationalistically distilled variant on Jean-Jacques Rousseau's theory of the general will, on one hand, Kant argued that a state becomes legitimate if it is separated from all patrimonial authority, if its laws are applied without variation of status through society, and if it enshrines laws that can be recognized by rationally reflexive subjects as preconditions for the exercise of freedoms appreciable equally by all members of society. Deviating somewhat from Rousseau's skeptical attitude to antecedent rights and pure theories of natural law, however, Kant also claimed that legitimate statehood is defined by the fact that the state

recognizes all those subject to its power as bearers of inviolable rights, such that freedoms protected by a legitimate state are anterior to, and they subject to prior constraint, any institution utilizing politically coercive force. Kant's liberalism thus approved certain principles of the radical republicanism generated in revolutionary France. However, his doctrine of legitimacy remained closer to the liberal monarchism of 1791 than to the Jacobin republicanism of 1793 to 1794, and it provided a model for government under the rule of law in a rights-based constitutional monarchy. Vital to Kant's thinking was the claim that in a legitimate political system, the law originates exclusively in the exercise of autonomy by pure rational beings, separated from historical and cultural context and elevated above material and sensory experience. For Kant, the law of the legitimate state is the law in which autonomous rational agents project a condition of ideal liberty, whose founding principles can be universalized across all historical and geographical locations. Underlying the legitimate state is thus, for Kant, the pure personality of the rationally free and autonomous human agent.

Like the French Revolution itself, Kantian liberalism became a touchstone for the formation of ideological movements throughout the nineteenth century. Subsequent ideological positions—liberal, conservative, and radical—tended to organize their arguments in critical response to the perceived antinomies of Kantian thought, and in particular, the apparent historical and experiential vacuity of Kantian ideals of autonomy became a focus of critique across the political spectrum. In the liberal canon, to be sure, Kantian ideas retained influence throughout the nineteenth century. For example, the major popular liberal theorists of the national-revolutionary era leading up to 1848, Karl von Rotteck and Karl Theodor Welcker, reinvigorated Kantian principles of rights-based legitimacy. Toward 1900, the Marburg school, centered around Paul Natorp and Hermann Cohen, promoted an influential fusion of ethical socialism and progressive liberalism, based in a reconstruction of Kantian thought as a doctrine of moral community. After 1945, Kantian thought witnessed a dramatic and still enduring resurgence. This resurgence was visible first in the existentially inflected Kantian ethics set out by Karl Jaspers, and it persisted in the works of Jürgen Habermas. Habermas's early writings combined republicanism and Marxism, but his work acquired greatest impact through its reconfiguration of Kantian universalism to define rights-

based communicative consensus as the prerequisite for legitimate government. Even in the liberal canon, however, post-Kantian German political theory evolved, not primarily as an affirmative reception, but as a rejection of Kantian liberal ideas in their pure form.

The liberal reaction against Kant became evident, first, in the works of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. Standing at the conservative perimeter of liberal reflection, Hegel argued that the achievements of the revolutionary era—personal rights, limited parliamentary representation, abolition of patrimonial authority, rational legal order, formal economic autonomy—needed to be separated from pure rational individualism, and they had to be comprehended as produced forms by society, reliant for their stable realization on complexly embedded relations of recognition, objective order, and enlightened education.

Slightly later, the consolidation of liberal theory through critical engagement with Kant was also a feature of the rise of positivism, in many respects the defining and most distinctive strand of German liberal thought. Positivism was initially promoted in the nineteenth century, in particular by Georg Friedrich Puchta, Rudolf Jhering, Karl von Gerber, and Paul Laband, as a body of cautiously reformist legal and political theory. On one hand, positivism revolved around the claim that all legitimate order is subject to legal constraint. On the other hand, however, it argued that the legal limits of public authority arise, not from any ethical presumptions in the Kantian sense, but from the general, uniform, and positive order of law itself, whose origins reside in the sovereign power of the state, and which is closed against externalistic ethical or utilitarian considerations. Distinctively, positivism viewed the concepts of Roman private law, especially the Roman concept of legal personality, as the most adequate terms for expressing the conditions in which political coercion could be legitimately enforced. Positivism was in fact often characterized as Romanism. To a greater extent even than Kantianism, in consequence, early positivism expressed a cautious, formalistic theory of legal order, and it provided a model for a constitutional monarchy in which monarchical power was subject to clear yet weak counterweights. After 1900, however, positivism moved more decisively in the direction of republican constitutionalism. This move was expressed in the writings of Hans Kelsen, who helped to write the Austrian

Constitution of 1920. Close to liberal socialist ideals, Kelsen followed the general positivist impulse in asserting that law needed to be viewed as fully separate from moral imperatives. Yet he argued that public-legal norms formed an incontrovertible constitutional framework for state power and that power and law could not legitimately be applied as distinct resources. Dualistic constructions of state authority—that is, ideas of authority separating state power from the law—were derided by Kelsen as corruptly metaphysical representations of statehood.

The most far-reaching critique of Kant within the liberal movement can be identified on the historicist wing of German liberalism. Liberal historicism can itself be divided into two rather distinct groups. On one hand, the period connecting the failed constitutional revolutions of 1848 and the consolidation of Bismarck's imperial state after 1870 to 1871 witnessed a rise in the influence of organic liberalism or Germanism. This tendency became manifest, first, in the works of Otto von Gierke and second, in the writings and political interventions of Hugo Preuß, who played a significant role in writing first democratic German Constitution in 1919. Organic liberalism argued that German history provided the foundation for a specifically Germanic construction of government founded in associational life, and it stressed that legitimate statehood should be construed, in quasi-sociological terms, as an organic order, formed and legitimized through the active integration and reconciliation of the plural associations existing in civil society. Central to the liberalism of the Germanist school were a rejection of positivistic, Roman-legal constructions of the state as a volitional order detached from society more widely, and accordingly, an insistence that, as a center of pluralistic integration intersecting deeply with social organizations, the state was obliged to allocate rights to social agents both as bearers of singular-private rights and of collective-material or associational rights. In this respect, organic theory promoted social-liberal perspectives, and it at times coalesced with social-democratic ideals. Both Gierke and Preuß were critical of the classical liberal acceptance of capitalist private law as a formal constraint on public or constitutional law.

At the same time, German liberalism also promoted a more clearly nationalist school of historicist theory, which centered on a strict rejection of Kant's rational purism. This line of theory argued against static notions

of legitimacy derived from the natural legalism of the Enlightenment, and it was based in the broad sense that the conditions for the exercise of legitimate public power were ingrained in the conventions of national culture. Such assumptions were perfectly commensurable with liberal standpoints. This alignment is clear in the case of Johann Gustav Droysen, a strong supporter of national constitutionalism in 1848, and Wilhelm Dilthey, who viewed the interpretation of national culture as a source of personal freedom and self-enrichment. However, such historicism assumed its defining political expression in the national-liberal movement of imperial Germany, exemplified by Heinrich von Treitschke. Treitschke asserted that national freedom and personal freedom are closely connected, and he observed the powerful national state as a personality able legitimately to incorporate the freedoms of, and so demand obedience from, all members of national society. A final echo of national historicism is discernable in the writings of Max Weber, the most notable liberal theorist of the later Imperial era. Weber's political work was founded in the assumption that human freedoms are underpinned by visceral experiences of national affiliation, and he defined a legitimate state as an institution able to integrate the pluralistically divided sectors of mass society by appealing to social agents as constituent parts of a national collective. On this basis, Weber proposed a two-sided theory of the late liberal state. He argued that the state is legitimized, externally, by its pursuit of national economic prerogatives, and it is legitimized, internally, by its ability to integrate different social groups through the affectual appeals of elite politicians and through the partitioning of national goods for the sake of national integration and equilibrium.

German Conservatism

As in other European countries, early German conservatism was originally defined by opposition to the rationalistic objectives of the Kantian Enlightenment and the French Revolution. In the first instance, German conservatism was marked by a spirit of nostalgic romanticism, which looked back to estate-based premodern society in which religion, local power, and the authority of the Holy Roman Empire formed the bedrock of social order. The more overtly reactionary examples of early German conservatism, exemplified after 1815 by Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von

Schelling and Friedrich Julius Stahl, moved close to classical theorists of the restoration such as Joseph de Maistre and contended that legitimate authority could only be based in religion. More moderate lines of conservatism, exemplified by Karl Friedrich von Savigny, tended to reflect Burkeian ideals, and while rejecting rationalistic constitutional ideals, they were prepared to accept sociopolitical transformation if it occurred as an organic or gradualistic process. In these respects, different lines of early German conservatism paralleled typical patterns of conservative thinking in other post-1789 European societies.

More distinctive patterns of conservatism began to evolve in Germany through the course of the nineteenth century. In many cases, German conservatism was defined by its renunciation of classical conservative interests such as religious piety, inherited status, and local authority, and it began instead to galvanize more typically liberal outlooks into identifiably reactionary form. In fact, it was a characteristic of German conservatism in the later nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries that rightist perspectives, culminating in the ideological stances broadly linked to National Socialism (the German variant on European fascism), were elaborated on the foundation of originally liberal doctrines.

As illustration, first, by the later nineteenth-century Hegel's conservative liberalism had been subject to highly reactionary reinterpretation, and the historicist aspects of Hegelian thinking had been transformed into a doctrine of culturally embedded authoritarianism. This transformation continued into the Weimar Republic, during which time a line of extremely reactionary post-Hegelian idealism became influential. Similarly, by the 1920s positivism had hardened into a set of deeply antiliberal stances. This reactionary intensification of positivism gained clearest expression in the thought of Carl Schmitt. At one level, Schmitt perceived himself as an antipositivist: he was full of invective for the liberal positivism of Kelsen, which he saw as an empty ideological formalism, threatening to destroy the power of the state by conflating state power with neutral legal norms. At times, Schmitt ridiculed the basic positivist idea that the law could be observed as an internally closed system of norms: he squarely opposed positivism by claiming that law needed to be explained sociologically and that public law only assumed value as the expression of the will of a

historically unified people. On this basis, Schmitt proposed a theory of political dictatorship, which argued that the constituent will of the people transmitted through the institutions of state should be viewed as higher-order law, which under some circumstances could be better defended by a commissar or dictator than by an elected parliament, defined by a formal constitutional order. Nonetheless, Schmitt remained close to positivism in that he defined state legitimacy, in Hobbesian categories, as the expression of political volition, he claimed that all law has its foundation in positive acts of state, and he concluded that the law formed by the will of the state forms a coercive order that cannot be challenged by extralegal or normative principles. After 1933, Schmitt concluded that national law should be perceived as an unquestionably valid concrete order, and he proposed a doctrine of political authority that fused positivist principles with a technocratic conception of state power as a function of positive administrative steering. This reactionary positivist aspect of Schmitt's thought became foundational for post-1945 conservative thinking, and it was assimilated in the works of Ernst Forsthoff, Arnold Gehlen, and to some degree, Niklas Luhmann.

By the 1920s, likewise, liberal historicist thinking was largely aligned to reactionary attitudes, and opponents of the democratic experiment in the Weimar Republic typically argued that parliamentarism was irreconcilable with the political customs arising from German historical life. In many cases, conservative historicism was linked to the Lutheran milieu, which identified German national culture as secularized Lutheranism, intrinsically sympathetic to authoritarianism and hostile to democratic aspirations. The most prominent example of ultrareactionary historicism is the political philosophy of Martin Heidegger, who examined national history as the horizon of all human life and self-interpretation. In a radical historicist response to neo-Kantianism, Heidegger claimed that obedience to directives arising from national culture (i.e., ordained by the state) should be acknowledged and resolutely accepted as shared fate by all members of a national collective. Analogously, by the 1930s, organic theory was also appropriated by reactionary movements. Although less susceptible than positivism or historicism to reactionary misconstruction, organic theory, especially in its hostility to formal statism and its insistence on the complex linkage between state and society, became the basis for the national

corporatism that underpinned economic outlooks in both Germany and Austria in the earlier part of the 1930s. Othmar Spann can be cited as the most striking example of this outlook.

Across the spectrum of reactionary thinking, in short, modern German conservatism evolved in a terrain that had been cleared by liberal thinkers. National Socialism itself was an ultrareactionary ideology that turned against the principles of classical conservatism and manufactured its outlooks through a selective absorption of liberal and to a lesser degree, Marxist concepts. Numerous historical reasons can be cited to explain the close relation between liberalism and extreme conservatism in Germany. One reason for this similarity was simply that the unified German state was formed in 1870, after the age of high liberalism had passed: as a result, liberalism never emerged as a persuasive response to pressing societal exigencies in the united Germany, and it lacked the overarching integrative force possessed by liberalism in Britain, France, or the United States. A further reason was that the unified German state was formed at a time when, across Europe, liberalism was deeply (and usually sympathetically) shaped by the experience of imperialism so that liberal reformism and enthusiasm for national strength and expansion were often inseparable. One additional reason was that, whereas in most European countries the construction of a central state was the accomplishment of liberals or even of revolutionaries, in Germany the state-making endeavors of liberals (culminating in 1848) were a failure, and the unified state under Bismarck, although not without some liberal conventions, possessed a strongly authoritarian character. Of greatest importance in this respect, however, is the fact that in Germany liberalism was not firmly established as an ideology when Marxism began to figure as a powerful mobilizing force; this lack meant that the ability of liberalism to integrate sectors of the moderate left, so typical of British liberalism, was limited, and liberalism tended to gravitate to the right and to legitimize itself through appeals to social groups alarmed by the rise of Marxism and the trade-union movement. Of course, the convergence of liberal and reactionary views was not exclusive to Germany. This can in fact be observed in most European societies. Nonetheless, it remains striking that in Germany liberalism lacked an encompassing appeal, it could easily be discredited, and it offered conceptual foundations for highly reactionary attitudes.

The most striking example of this phenomenon is again provided by Weber. Although by affiliation liberal, Weber's political thought was centered in the claim that Marx's account of modern society as defined by class conflict over socioeconomic goods had to be supplanted by an account of modern society as defined by political conflict over national interests: he extracted a theory of social conflict from Marxism, and he inserted this concept into a doctrine of national antagonism in which nation superseded class as the primary source of collective political motivation. In this respect, Weber's political sociology reflected a wider tendency to combine conflict theory and nationalism, which became widespread in the course of World War I and eventually assumed central status in fascist ideology. Weber, we can speculate, would doubtless have been implacably hostile to the fascist regime that eventually emerged in Germany. However, his work shows quite strikingly how liberalism contributed to the ideological basis of German conservatism, and it illuminates the ideological predicaments faced by German liberalism, which was forced to solidify a liberal-democratic creed at a point when the tenets of liberalism had lost their motivational force. Tellingly, Schmitt himself classified the most extreme example of German conservatism—National Socialism—as authoritarian liberalism.

German Radicalism

Modern German political radicalism had its origins in the anthropological materialism of Ludwig Feuerbach. Proceeding from a humanistic reconstruction of Hegelian philosophy, Feuerbach argued that human life suffers from intense alienation as a result of Christian belief, which in projecting human essence (species-being) onto the deity, subordinates humanity to a falsely externalized image of its own innermost attributes and estranges it from its intrinsic capacities for shared freedom and sensory enjoyment. The concept of alienation was already implicit in Hegel's phenomenological account of social polarization. Yet it was Feuerbach who placed this concept at the center of a theory of human society and historical experience. Subsequently, Marx developed his early theory as a microanalysis of alienation, which redefined alienation, not as the consequence of religious projection, but as the result of material exploitation under conditions of early capitalism. After Marx, the discovery of alienation impacted across all lines of political thinking, and deep

concern with this concept connected Marxism, Weberian liberalism, Schmitt's theory of dictatorship, and Heidegger's fascist historicism.

In the wake of Marx's writings, German radicalism first produced a distinct orthodoxy in the course of the revisionist controversy, which defined debate in the Social Democratic Party (SPD) before 1900. Owing to the rise of the SPD as a powerful and highly organized movement in the 1890s, German socialist theory, expressed in particular by Eduard Bernstein, began to veer away from its revolutionary beginnings, and it proposed a revisionist doctrine of working-class organization, which stressed the importance of parliamentary democracy, centralized state authority, and regular political representation as essential to the successful amelioration of conditions of labor. Although contested within the SPD, by 1914 the revisionist stance became effective orthodoxy for the German labor movement. This position absorbed important impulses from Austro-Marxism in the works of Karl Renner, Rudolf Hilferding, and Otto Bauer, who argued, diversely, that cross-class collaboration, concentration of economic authority in the national state, and progressive revision of private-legal relations were vital devices for establishing a socialist economy. The Weimar Republic itself was in fact initially an experiment in an early system of welfare democracy in which state control of select industrial sectors and workers' codetermination of employment relations were accorded constitutional standing.

Ultimately, however, German radical theory assumed its greatest influence by establishing a framework in which Marxist analysis could be reincorporated into philosophical discourse. In so doing, it provided enduring foundations for the different tendencies within what became known as Western Marxism more broadly. This redirection of Marxist inquiry resulted in part from a reappropriation of the concept of alienation originally elaborated by Marx, and moreover, it drew impetus from a deep critical engagement with Kantian philosophy.

First, in the early 1920s, György Lukács proposed an analysis of capitalist society that argued that capitalism needed to be comprehended, not solely as a material-economic reality, but as a cognitive-epistemological condition, shaped by a total (i.e., material, cognitive, and historical) experience of

human alienation. The overthrow of capitalism presupposed, for Lukács, a reconfiguration of human rationality itself: it could only occur if human rationality divested itself of its Kantian self-constructions, which Lukács characterized as bourgeois reason, and if it recognized itself as historically mediated through the socially constructed reality of exchange relations. Such material-historical self-analysis of reason, Lukács claimed, would provide the epistemological basis for a revolutionary transformation of the historical conditions that had caused the alienation of human consciousness. Together with the almost simultaneous writings of Antonio Gramsci, Lukács's account of capitalism established the premise for the subsequent orientation of Western Marxism away from traditional questions of party organization toward analysis of capitalism as a hegemonic cultural condition.

Under the pervasive influence of Lukács, then, during the 1930s and in particular, after 1945, German Marxism intensified its cultural-epistemological emphasis. This emphasis was expressed especially in the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt school, which combined Marxist political economy, Lukácsian theories of rationality, and quasi-existential analysis of cultural alienation. Expressed primarily in the works of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, the Frankfurt school argued that modern capitalism needed to be appreciated as a condition of extreme and dehumanizing alienation in which the instrumental or taxonomic dimensions of human reason (in its Kantian self-construction) had eradicated capacities for nonoppressive recognition, natural experience, and sensory gratification, which were also intrinsic to human life. This argument resulted in a theory of the dialectic of Enlightenment, which examined the modern economy and the modern state as distillations of the violently instrumental emphases of rational subjectivity. It was closely shaped by an account of National Socialism, and in particular of the regimented genocide that occurred in the German concentration camps, as intensified reflections of the intrinsically violating potentials of the models of reason promoted in the Enlightenment.

Although it played a fundamental role in shaping the political culture of the 1960s, in its first generation, the Frankfurt school scarcely produced a coherent body of political theory. However, some ideas resulting from the Frankfurt school were transformed into a more coherent political doctrine

by Habermas. Habermas tied the theory of alienation to a concept of communicative rationality, which claimed that undistorted communication between free participants in rational discourse might establish general conditions for nonalienated (and thus legitimate) political existence. Indeed, Habermas's thought assumed the distinction in the broader context of German political thought that it assimilated classically anti-Kantian impulses such as concern with historicity, singular existential experience, and material alienation into a basically Kantian insistence on legal universalism as the foundation of legitimacy. In this respect, Habermas's work can be seen as drawing together the antinomies of German theoretical reflection first engendered through the anti-Kantian trajectory of German liberal theory, and it proposes a rescue of the Kantian Enlightenment through a doctrine of communicative interaction and lived solidarity.

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See also [Authority](#); [Autonomy](#); [Conservatism](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Fascism](#); [Fichte, Johann Gottlieb](#); [Frankfurt School](#); [German Enlightenment](#); [Habermas, Jürgen](#); [Heidegger, Martin](#); [Kant, Immanuel](#); [Liberalism](#); [Lukács, György](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [National Socialism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Radicalism](#); [Romanticism](#); [Social Democracy](#); [Socialism](#); [Totalitarianism](#)

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Global Civil Society

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Global Civil Society

The concept of global civil society first came to prominence in the 1990s in response to the increasingly deterritorialized nature of political activism after the end of the Cold War. Users of the concept sought to capture the upsurge of transnational civic—as opposed to state—activity from human rights activism to global popular movements against state actors (e.g., the battle in Seattle protests during the 1999 World Trade Organization ministerial conference). The mood reflected by the concept was one of global popular agency—of a revolution from below to counter the deleterious effects of a neoliberal form of economic globalization that had been imposed from above. Global civil society, on this reading, was the driver of a fundamental shift from the politics of states to the politics of peoples—that is, from the politics of narrow state self-interest to the politics of global shared values and from the politics of state sovereignty and nonintervention, behind which tyrants hid, to the politics of human rights.

Global civil society projected globally a longstanding concept—civil society. The citizen self-organization referred to by this latter concept, traditionally held to be a counterweight to state power in liberal societies, also seemed central to the third wave of democratizations that toppled authoritarian states around the world in the 1980s and 1990s. Civil society actors from Manila to Prague were seen as having more in common with each other (commitment to human rights and democracy) than with their own states. It seemed a logical step to include in the concept of civil society recognition of the fact that activists were increasingly no respecters of

borders, agitating for the rights of citizens in countries other than their own. Where Cold War realists had seen little if any role for actors other than states in the international arena, the 1990s seemed to inaugurate a poststatist and postnational form of politics in which civic, rather than state actors and values, rather than interests, had begun to predominate.

Thus, global civil society is at once a normative and descriptive concept. Descriptively, it focuses on transnational civic activism, on citizens without borders. Normatively, it emphasizes the role of such activism in undermining what is seen to be the largely self-serving and amoral behavior of states in the international system. Global civil society holds out the hope of a world order defined less by self-interested states operating under conditions of anarchy and more by a rule-based international system in which states are increasingly constrained by human rights and democratic norms. In this sense, global civil society has been seen as the agent of the domestication of the international and as such, as an answer to war.

Critics of the concept of global civil society have pointed to the questionable democratic credentials of transnational civic actors, who can neither claim to represent, nor to be accountable to, fixed constituencies in the way of territorialized political actors. On this critique, transnational activism is an expression, ironically, more of the atomization of political struggle than its reformation at the global level. Easy identification with global good causes is held to be a poor substitute for the political engagement characteristic of territorialized politics, which forces political actors either to convince others or to compromise. It has also been argued that transnational actors are just as likely to be noncivic (international terrorism, the mafia, etc.), such that it sometimes seems like definitional fiat to include only groups that conform to the liberal values alluded to by the concept.

Neo-Foucauldians have also suggested that global civil society actors, especially international nongovernmental organizations, are central to the spread of biopolitical forms of control in which populations are seen as in need of, and amenable to, interventions designed to secure the needs of life itself. From this perspective, global civil society, reflecting Michel Foucault's earlier account of civil society in liberal states, is the product of,

rather than the cause of, liberal governance. In an attempted update of Foucault's thesis, liberal governance is read as a global phenomenon, with the associated shift from civil to global civil society that accompanies this extension of liberal governmentality. Thus, a concept associated with unambiguously positive change in the 1990s is now taken to be more ideological than it had first seemed.

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See also [Citizenship](#); [Civil Society](#); [Cosmopolitanism](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Foucault, Michel](#); [Globalization](#); [International Law](#); [International Relations Theory and Political Thought](#); [Legitimacy](#); [Liberalism](#); [Modernization](#); [Nationalism](#); [Political Culture](#); [Radicalism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Globalization

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Globalization

Globalization is the increasing integration of the world and greater interconnection of various states and societies. It covers a number of different fields—including culture, politics, and economics—and is best understood as a development stemming from the metaphorical compression of distance in the world as a result of technological advances. In other words, innovations such as ships, the telegraph, and aircraft have allowed information, people, and commodities to move from place to place increasingly more quickly. The economic ramifications of globalization have been especially accentuated in discussions of the process.

As a term, *globalization* is more often than not effectively used as a synonym for other processes, such as the pursuit of free-market policies across the world or for Westernization (i.e., the increase of the dominance of Western, and especially American, values in political, economic, and cultural life across the globe). The conflation of globalization with other phenomena is undesirable insofar as it strips the term of its own distinct meaning. Nevertheless, there is considerable overlap between globalization and other modern trends in world politics and international relations. In particular, it has become bound up with the development of capitalism, especially from the post-1945 period onward, and there is debate as to whether globalization is a discrete stage in the history of capitalism or if it instead belongs to a longer-term process. Therefore, satisfactorily establishing the meaning and relevance of globalization requires the use of a historical approach.

History of Globalization

Andre Gunder Frank, among others, contends that globalization should be traced back to the ancient world and the earliest emergence of cities connected to trading networks. Frank argues that history has been characterized by a single, evolving, world system and that the division of history into stages of feudalism, capitalism, and so on is a fallacy. This view has, however, been criticized on a number of grounds, most notably by Immanuel Wallerstein, who instead posits that capitalism is a modern and distinctive mode of production and that any concept of a world system can only be dated back to the sixteenth century when capital accumulation began to promote commercial development. Janet Abu-Lughod has revised Wallerstein's argument by advancing the idea that a premodern world system, centered on Eurasia and consolidated by the Mongol Empire, existed in the thirteenth century and that its collapse precipitated the rise of the European system. Thus, Abu-Lughod's theory complements rather than replaces Wallerstein's, while the latter's has become recognized as the starting point for the majority of discussions on globalization and world-systems theory.

The period from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth century can be described as one of proto-globalization led by the expansion of European empires. The discovery of the New World played a key role in this development, as did the complementary growth of European trading posts in Africa and Asia. This discovery allowed commodities and people to flow across the globe, with profits promoting the further accumulation of capital and greater investment. Almost the entire world became connected in a single, Eurocentric, system of trade while the migration of people—and especially the establishment of settler societies in other parts of the globe—meant that cultural exchange also began to play a more prominent role in international relations. Although Europe was at the core of this new system, there were also multilateral exchanges, including the introduction of flora and fauna to new areas and the infamous triangular trade of African slaves to the West Indies in exchange for goods then traded in Europe. It must be acknowledged that this period was distinct from the later phases of globalization in as much as it was both preindustrial and largely dependent on a system of mercantilism (i.e., the involvement of the state in

mechanisms of trade through the creation of chartered companies and similar devices).

With the emergence of industrialization in the nineteenth century, the pace of globalization increased significantly. A demographic revolution had preceded the industrial one, and the vast increase in population growth further fuelled the migration of Europeans overseas, especially to the New World and the United States in particular, increasing the level of cultural exchange. Similarly, the development of modern industry, facilitated by technological advances, created economies of scale and enabled the beginning of mass production. Manufactured products were sold internationally, and Britain, the first industrialized country, became the workshop of the world. The advent of railways and the steamship compressed journey times and aided both trade and the movement of individuals. Innovation in transport also played a key role in promoting the expansion of modern cities, which in turn became organs of further globalization. Meanwhile, financial institutions became increasingly sophisticated and international in focus. Overseas investment of capital became relatively commonplace, furthering the integration of the global economy. Imperialism remained a major force, although the new imperialism of the late nineteenth century took on a different character than earlier forms.

In the twentieth century, the path of globalization was far from smooth. World War I (1914–18) undermined globalization, and its progress seemed to halt, and even turn backward, during the interwar years. The Great Depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s led to a breakdown in international trade as countries increasingly adopted beggarthy-neighbor policies of protective tariff barriers and competitive devaluations. This trend was itself reversed after World War II, and the pace of globalization increased rapidly. This increase was especially apparent in economic terms, and the 1944 Bretton Woods conference laid the groundwork for the liberalization of trade regimes, a goal furthered by the 1946 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the subsequent establishment of the World Trade Organization in 1995. International organizations such as the United Nations, military alliances such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and supranational bodies such as the European Union had,

and continue to have, an impact on political integration in the world. The decline of colonial empires in the period also disconnected globalization from formal imperialism, although cultural ties, especially those predicated on linguistic factors, remain. Moreover, the advance of communications technology, especially television and the Internet, has enhanced these cultural exchanges. A particular feature of this postwar period, especially in the Western world, is the rise of multinational companies alongside the relative shift away from trade in physical goods toward the intangible trade of services and finance and the greater integration that this brought. Michael Bordo, Barry Eichengreen, and Douglas Irwin contend that this recent phase of globalization has produced a far more integrated global economy than was the case in the nineteenth century; a manifestation of this being that the 2008 financial crisis had worldwide repercussions on the economy. The late twentieth century also saw increasing resistance to globalization as movements emerged calling for the embrace of traditional culture while anticapitalist organizations critiqued globalization as a process that, by moving economic power beyond the limits of state boundaries, placed too much influence in the hands of unaccountable businesses, concerns that have continued to be heard in the twenty-first century.

Notable Theorists of Globalization

Globalization has become something of a buzzword in modern political discourse and as mentioned above, has often been used as a synonym for other issues. There are, however, a number of thinkers to whom we can turn for a more sophisticated account of globalization and its impact on the world today.

Anthony Giddens

Anthony Giddens, an architect of Third Way political thinking, considers globalization in many of his works, especially *The Consequences of Modernity* (1990). He makes an important contribution to our understanding of globalization by expressing it as a four-dimensional idea that incorporates the world capitalist economy, the nation-state system, international division of labor, and world military order. In doing so,

Giddens provides a conception of globalization that goes beyond the reductivist and commonplace interpretation that sees the phenomenon as simply a corollary of capitalism. He also sees globalization as an aspect of the modern world, one that is both dependent upon modernity and helps to shape it. The existence of such a dialogue between modernity and globalization is incompatible with, for example, the arguments of Frank on the ancient origins of globalization.

Thomas Friedman

Thomas Friedman is one of the most notable commentators on globalization working outside of academia. His work accentuates the tension in the modern world between the economic and cultural ramifications of globalization and the desire of many people to retain a distinct sense of tradition and local culture. Unlike a number of other popular commentators, he also attempts to demarcate globalization as a distinct system rather than use the term simply as a buzzword. He is also an advocate of globalization, which he sees as “flattening” the world and providing enhanced opportunities for free and fair commerce. Unlike the majority of thinkers, he sees globalization as a recent issue that emerged after the Cold War, with the fall of the Berlin Wall having special symbolic significance rather than having long-term roots.

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri are best known for their coauthored work *Empire* (2000), in which they put forward a Marxist-derived interpretation of globalization in the modern age. Like Wallerstein, they cut across traditional disciplinary boundaries in their analysis and portray the modern world as a transitory period from old imperialism to a postmodern construct of empire where the nation-state’s role is diminished and sovereignty has been passed to a transnational and deterritorialized entity.

Joseph Stiglitz

Joseph Stiglitz's two main works on globalization are *Making Globalization Work* (2006) and *Globalization and Its Discontents* (2002). He belongs to a reformist tradition, and in both works, Stiglitz is critical of globalization as it has occurred in practice, but he expresses hope that the process can be improved through active management and better utilization of international governance in particular. Much of his argument is predicated upon his own Nobel Prize winning work in information economics, alongside that of others working in the same field. He is especially critical of the International Monetary Fund and its tendency to levy too many restrictive conditions on states in return for aid, limiting their ability to intervene in the economy and preventing development from taking place in underdeveloped countries. Reducing inequality and dispelling the idea that free markets inevitably benefit everyone are key themes in his work.

Immanuel Wallerstein

Wallerstein's world-systems theory has made him perhaps the most famous theorist of the history of globalization. Besides his historical explanation, which has already been outlined, Wallerstein believes that the world today is typified by one global system of capitalism; at the same time, he acknowledges that this system does not provide a homogenous experience. Wallerstein describes the world in terms of multiple centers of political power in the form of states that may be divided into a core and a periphery. In the periphery, there are fundamentally lower levels of social development, and this divide shows no signs of closing significantly, leading Wallerstein to conclude that this division is inherent to the capitalist system and is caused by inequalities in trade relations. In analyzing globalization and the world system, Wallerstein has been influential in pushing disciplinary boundaries in the social sciences, arguing that the study of an integrating process requires a holistic method of interpretation.

Political Ideology and Globalization

Because globalization is such a broad concept, it is very difficult to make generalizations as to how any one ideology regards it. This scope is partly a result of differing interpretations and partly a consequence that because of

its breadth, it is possible to find both positive and negative aspects within it. In general, liberalism has been the major ideological force most optimistic about globalization, subject to a number of caveats concerning the need to ensure pluralism and differing arguments as to how far the state needs to be able to intervene in the economy. Conservatives have tended to criticize globalization for undermining national culture and traditions, although many holding neoliberal economic views continue to emphasize the importance of global free markets. Socialism has provoked perhaps the most nuanced and diverse responses to globalization. While Marxists have been critical of the process, seeing it as an extension of capitalism, social democrats have had more diverse responses to the issue, often favoring its potential for harmonization but expressing concern over the limits it places on states to control their own economies. More recently, neorevisionists of the Third Way vein have been more positive toward globalization and of its cosmopolitan potential in particular, with some seeing it as an irresistible force in any case. Green political theory, although a broad church of opinion, has shown some pragmatic support for using international and supranational bodies to further environmental goals in spite of general opposition to economic globalization. Of all major ideologies, it is perhaps fascism that has been most unambiguous in its rejection of globalization, with fascists seeing the process of global integration as damaging to national integrity and the strength of the state.

Jason N. Brock

See also [Capitalism](#); [Cosmopolitanism](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Global Civil Society](#); [International Relations Theory and Political Thought](#); [Liberalism](#); [Modernization](#); [Multiculturalism](#); [Nationalism](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [United Nations, Theories of the](#)

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Joseph-Arthur de Gobineau (1816–82), French novelist, man of letters, and diplomat, is a relatively obscure thinker today. He is best known for his work *An Essay on the Inequality of Human Races* (1853–55), in which he developed the theory of the Aryan master race and racial hierarchy. Gobineau was convinced that contemporary European society was being consumed by a terminal degeneration. This fear was hardly a unique position at the time—degeneracy was a ubiquitous theme in nineteenth-century French letters—but it was Gobineau's explanation that distinguished him: his deterministic conception of race as the key to understanding the human condition and the entirety of human history. All other factors conventionally cited to explain degeneration—immorality, bad government, materialism, irreligiosity—were irrelevant. In the *Essay*, Gobineau created a world history that accounted for the decline of civilization as a result of degeneracy defined as the contamination of the blood-purity of so-called higher races through mixing with lower races, the universal cause of the decline and fall of civilizations. "The racial question overshadows all other problems of history," Gobineau (1967, 41) argued. His views on morality, government, intellectual movements, and the role of the individual in history, all related to his racial determinism. Gobineau's racial thought cannot be separated from his attitude toward contemporary society. His aristocratic pretensions, royalist inclinations—the son of a pro-Bourbon royalist, he added "Comte" to his name as an adult—and his disillusionment with contemporary society bred his belief that France, and

Europe, were gripped by a profound, irreversible decline. As an adult, he was familiar with his contemporary Alexis de Tocqueville, serving as *chef de cabinet* to him when Tocqueville was foreign minister and corresponding with him extensively, and he served as a diplomat under the Second Empire. He also wrote novels, *Les Pleiades* (1874) and *La Renaissance* (1877), which expressed his reactionary sentiments and hatred of democratic mass politics.

Gobineau's racial theory has three essential elements: racial particularity, racial miscegenation, and degeneration. He asserted the existence of natural and immutable inequalities among the human races from which arise intellectual and cultural inequalities. The contradiction in Gobineau's thesis is his belief that despite natural human instincts that are repulsed by race mixing, civilization can only be created through an overcoming of this repulsion through a combination of "higher" with "lower" blood—the different races representing different capabilities and potentialities. Even so, civilization of any kind is impossible without Aryan domination. Gobineau is enamored of his conception of the Aryans, who represent beauty, heroism, strength, and dignity and who are alone capable of attaining high culture and civilization. The defining characteristics Gobineau attributed to lower races were perhaps reflected in those he despised in modern man: the "yellows" represented the materialistic, mediocre bourgeoisie; the "blacks," the destructive plebeian mobs. Gobineau denies the notion of continuous human progress in *An Essay on the Inequality of Human Races*, but in his fashion, he goes to the extreme of asserting that modern man has not made any meaningful progress beyond what the ancients achieved and that all modern knowledge is merely derivative. In foreshadowing later racist worldviews, Gobineau rejected principles of universal morality, individual free will, and conventional notions of good and evil in favor of racially rooted "elite morality." Any ethical system not based on race, not conceptualizing morality and intellect in their racial context, was inconsistent with his theory. Thus, the absence of any discussion of rights and obligations in the *Essay*: this would simply have been superfluous.

The *Essay* was written to support previously held positions, so the work is highly tendentious. Gobineau was fundamentally a thinker of his time, but his political and social thought has had some enduring impact, particularly

in the interwar period, though it would undoubtedly be a bitter irony for Gobineau to know that his ideas had their greatest impact (in adulterated form) among the demagogues of the vulgar masses he despised. An adulterated version of the *Essay* titled *The Moral and Intellectual Diversity of Races* appeared in the contemporary United States (1856), and a German edition in 1897. Future racist movements, not least Nazism, selectively borrowed from but extensively manipulated his work, making it possible to exaggerate his actual influence on German racial thought, given that his ideas were often misconstrued. Nevertheless, it was through the efforts of his German devotees that Gobineau's greatest following—posthumous, as little notice was taken of him in his own lifetime—was in Germany rather than his native France. While it may be that, as Michael Biddiss puts it, Gobineau's racial philosophy of history “surpasses in scope and sinister grandeur even the pages of *Mein Kampf*” (Biddiss 1970a, 3) it is the latter work that assumes today a far greater infamy, with Gobineau now largely forgotten.

Shane C. Nagle

See also [Fascism](#); [French Political Thought](#); [National Socialism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Race and Racism](#); [Tocqueville](#), [Alexis de](#)

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Godwin, William

William Godwin (1756–1836) is a major figure in the development of liberal and radical political thought. He is the founding father of philosophical anarchism, but his intellectual contribution is also of significance for the development of utilitarianism as a moral theory, for the development of a secular defense of the sanctity of the right of private judgment, and for the diverse ways in which he sought to convey his ideas to a mass audience. Although he is best known for his work at the time of the French Revolution, he had a long and productive life and contributed widely in literature, history, and political controversy throughout his life.

Early Life and Writings

William Godwin was born in Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, to John Godwin, a Dissenting minister, and his wife Anne. He was an intellectually precocious child and strongly influenced by his family's Dissenting beliefs: his childhood memories include the composition of a poem titled "I Wish to Be a Minister," delivering sermons to his family from a kitchen chair, and haranguing his contemporaries from the pulpit of the meetinghouse.

At eleven, having persuaded his family of his calling, Godwin was sent as a boarding pupil to Samuel Newton, an independent minister in Norwich whose theological leanings were to Sandemanianism, an extreme form of Calvinism demanding uniformity of opinion among the elect. Godwin hated

Newton for his use of corporal punishment but retained his vocation, and in 1773, he sought to complete his education at a Dissenting Academy. He was turned down by Homerton Academy on suspicion of Sandemanianism but was admitted to Hoxton, a more liberal establishment. The young scholar fully embraced the opportunity afforded him, getting up at five and reading till midnight to allow sufficient time for study.

Godwin graduated in 1778 and after some time in London and Ware, was appointed to a position in Stowmarket, Suffolk, in 1780. Here, he read French Enlightenment thinkers who profoundly shook his faith. Godwin, now moving toward deism, left his post after a dispute with his congregation and moved to London in 1782 to pursue a career as a writer.

His first published work was the *Life of Lord Chatham* (1783), intended to be the first in a series of English biographies. Thereafter, he secured a modest income by reviewing for the *English Review*; by publishing *The Herald of Literature* (1783), a collection of spoof reviews; by writing political pamphlets largely supportive of the Whigs; and in 1784, moving into literature by publishing three novellas. A regular income was not secured until 1784 when his old tutor Andrew Kippis recommended him to the publisher George Robinson to write the British and foreign sections of the Whiggish *New Annual Register*, a position that paid a stipend of sixty guineas and that he held for seven years.

Godwin's talent and intellectual precocity brought him to the attention of London's literary and political worlds, and during the 1780s, he met a wide range of political and literary figures such as Richard Brinsley Sheridan, George Canning, Hester Piozzi, and Thomas Holcroft. Holcroft was a particularly important figure in Godwin's life, and their intimacy influenced his politics and literary efforts throughout the most prolific period of his career. In 1788, he also began a diary, which he kept meticulously until his death and which reveals the wide extent of his political, literary, and artistic circles.

Peak of Godwin's Career

Godwin spent 1790 writing *St Dunstan*, a blank verse tragedy that was a thinly disguised call for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, legislation that excluded Dissenters from certain civil rights. Dissatisfied with the limitations of the dramatic form and believing a more comprehensive treatment of the relationship between individual, society, and government was required, in the summer of 1791 he negotiated an arrangement by which Robinson would support him financially while he composed a treatise on political principles. The work was initially conceived as a corrective to Charles-Louis Montesquieu's *L'esprit des lois* (1748) but grew in scope and ambition in its composition, influenced by the intellectual and political controversy that surrounded Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) and Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* (1791–92). *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* was published in February 1793, and its importance in the war of ideas that followed the French Revolution was immediately recognized.

The treatise argues that the developing powers of the human mind will allow the gradual dismantling of institutions such as government, the judiciary, and the monarchy. This utopian future will emerge through the full and free exercise of individual private judgment and public discussion. Conversation is presented as a central mechanism through which society could advance knowledge in a measured and methodical fashion. The work combines the necessarianism of David Hartley and Joseph Priestley with the view that mind is itself a real cause and that no additional motive for our recognition of the truth of normative proposition is in itself sufficient to motivate our compliance. It develops an ideal form of utilitarianism in which the pleasures of the mind and of benevolence are qualitatively higher than those of the senses. Government and religious institutions have only served to fetter the development of mind through imposition and fraudulent assertions of authority, but the advance of knowledge is irresistible, and political and moral truth will eventually triumph. The result is a complex position in which the perfectionist doctrine of the development of the exercise of private judgment constrains the application of the principle of utility maximization.

In the final section of the work, Godwin assumes a still more speculative agenda and countenances the abolition of private property and marriage,

alongside the development of an increasingly cerebral world in which the exercise of mind supersedes the lower sensual pleasures and comes increasingly to control the processes of aging and physiological deterioration so that man may, indeed, become immortal. Two subsequent editions followed in November 1795 and December 1797, with manifold revisions, toning down the concluding sentiments, rendering the language more consistently utilitarian, weakening Godwin's earlier Platonism with regard to truth, introducing a more skeptical tone under the influence of David Hume, and refining in various ways many parts of the original work. There is also a shift toward acknowledging the importance of private affections, which had earlier been consigned to the sphere of irrational obstacles to the exercise of universal benevolence, and the more speculative parts of the final book are considerably toned down. Nonetheless, Godwin felt he could proclaim that the essential outlines of the work remained unchanged.

Godwin's concern with how knowledge could best be disseminated and society ameliorated is demonstrated in his persistent fictional and dramatic efforts over the next decade and beyond, the most successful example being his novel *Caleb Williams* ([1794] 2009), a powerful indictment of the corrupting effects of power written specifically as a platform for the ideas of *Political Justice* for those "persons whom books of philosophy and science are never likely to reach" (312).

The mid-1790s saw Godwin at the height of his fame. William Hazlitt, in his essay on Godwin in *Spirit of the Age*, wrote that Godwin

blazed as a sun in the firmament of reputation; no one was more talked of, more looked up to, more sought after, and wherever liberty, truth, justice was the theme, his name was not far off; no work in our time gave such a blow to the philosophical mind of the country as the celebrated *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*. (Hazlitt 1915, 23)

Although Godwin disassociated himself from popular political societies such as the London Corresponding Society, he remained close to several of their members. When the government moved, in May 1794, to arrest the

leaders of the Society for Constitutional Information and the London Corresponding Society on charges of high treason for having planned a British Convention along lines suggested by Thomas Paine to test the opinion of the nation on reform, Godwin leapt to their defense in his *Cursory Strictures on the Charge Delivered by Lord Chief Justice Eyre to the Grand Jury*. It was a resounding success, and the most prominent accused, John Horne Tooke, credited his acquittal to its arguments.

In 1796, Godwin was reintroduced to Mary Wollstonecraft, whom he had first met but not warmed to at a dinner with Thomas Paine in 1791. This time things went more smoothly. They became lovers in August 1796, and Wollstonecraft subsequently became pregnant in December that year. The two initially lived their lives separately in accordance with their political principles but eventually bowed to convention and married in March 1797 to the delight of conservative critics. Their daughter Mary (later Mary Shelley) was born on August 30, 1797, and Wollstonecraft died from complications ten days later. Godwin was devastated and threw himself into the writing of her memoirs, a frank account of her life that exposed her to the ridicule of their political opponents and marked a decline in Godwin's own reputation that he never reversed.

Later Years

He continued to write novels—*St Leon* (1799), *Fleetwood* (1805)—and plays—*Antonio* (1800), *Abbas, King of Persia* (1801)—but the former had limited success while the latter had none whatsoever. In 1801, he married Mary Jane Clairmont whose children Charles and Jane were added to his own household. Money became an increasing problem. In 1805, with the help of some friends, Godwin opened a bookshop on Hanway Street in central London and established a juvenile library of publications. To avoid the opprobrium associated with his own name, it operated as M. J. Godwin & Co., but it was only a moderate success. Godwin contributed a number of historical and pedagogical texts for children, but the shop is best known for publishing Charles and Mary Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare* and the first English edition of *Swiss Family Robinson*.

In 1812, Percy Shelley wrote to Godwin expressing rapt admiration for the author of *Political Justice*. The devotion and the potential financial assistance the wealthy young aristocrat offered seemed too good to be true, and indeed, it was. The relationship began well but foundered rapidly on the rocks of Godwin's curmudgeonly ways, Shelley's obstinacy, and Mary Jane Godwin's temper. The fact that Shelley's father kept a tight rein on his son's income did not help, either. When Shelley fell in love with Godwin's daughter, Mary, and eloped with her in 1814, the relationship was irrevocably damaged.

Despite his personal turmoil, Godwin began to write in earnest again. He published his *Lives of the Phillipses*, a history of John Milton's nephews in 1815 and added a fourth major novel, *Mandeville*, in 1817. His *Of Population*, a lengthy rebuttal of Malthus (whose *Essay on the Principle of Population* of 1798 had taken Godwin as its central target), appeared in 1820. Godwin's republican and historical interests resulted in a four-volume *History of the Commonwealth of England* (1824–28); there were two further novels; and a set of philosophical essays appeared in 1831 under the title *Thoughts on Man*. A modern reader may find the spark of his earlier works absent, but Godwin's meticulous research, patient writing, and his measured prose ensured his position as a significant citizen of the republic of letters of the early nineteenth century. His business went bankrupt in 1825, and he remained plagued by financial worries. When the Whigs finally came to power, he lobbied Earl Grey and Lord Melbourne, and in 1833, he was appointed to the post of office keeper and yeoman usher of the receipt of the exchequer, a sinecure offered by the "brute engine" (as he had referred to government in *Political Justice*) that ensured that his final years were relatively comfortable. He died on April 7, 1836, and was buried close to Wollstonecraft in the cemetery of St Pancras Old Church, London.

Conclusion

Godwin occupies an important place in the history of political philosophy. He is the first philosophical anarchist and influenced later generations of writers in that tradition; it is difficult to read John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty* without thinking that their meeting in the 1830s must have had some influence on Mill's own ideals; his version of utilitarianism is in many

respects dramatically more appealing than that advanced by Jeremy Bentham and his followers; and he represents a major figure in a decade that saw some of the most intense political controversy and intellectual experimentation, involving a wide public audience, in the history of Britain. His other writings, which are either ignored or studied only by literary scholars, are central to understanding his developing views on the two objects that absorbed him throughout his life—the nature of political, moral, and religious truth, and the means by which those in the vanguard of its discovery can communicate their findings to others so as to promote the full development of our capacities as rational beings.

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See also [Anarchism](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [French Enlightenment](#); [French Revolution, Political Thought of the](#); [Ideology](#); [Individualism](#); [Liberalism](#); [Libertarianism](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Paine, Thomas](#); [Republicanism](#); [Rousseau, Jean-Jacques](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Utilitarianism](#); [Utopianism](#); [Wollstonecraft, Mary](#).

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Emma Goldman (1869–1940) was born in Lithuania to a Jewish family of lower middle-class status. She achieved the equivalent of an 8th-grade education before being pulled from school to work in support of her family. As a young girl, she developed a fascination with the shadowy world of Russian revolutionaries, especially the women radicals who overthrew bourgeois convention to live sexually free, politically rebellious lives. Arriving in the United States from Russia in 1885 with the first big wave of Eastern-European Jewish immigrants, Goldman soon made her political home in the anarchist movement. For over fifty years, she worked tirelessly to create and publicize the anarchist vision of liberated individuals living cooperatively within a free society. Anarchism, she declared, envisioned a world in which strong, self-creating women and men could be free from the economic shackles of capitalism, the moral confinement of organized religion, the personal and economic constraints of conventional marriage, and the political straitjacket of the state. She saw no contradiction between the twin goals of fostering creative, autonomous individuals within free and egalitarian political communities, seeing independent individuals and supportive communities as mutually creating one another.

Much of Goldman's education took place within the anarchist movement, where radical politics mixed readily with the intellectual heritage of European radicalism, progressive theater, and American individualism. Goldman's most profound influences came from Peter A. Kropotkin and Michael Bakunin, nineteenth-century Russian anarchists from whom she

drew the broad strokes of her vision of revolutionary struggle toward a classless society. She was also affected by the more spiritual approach to politics in the writings of German anarchist Gustav Landauer, the iconoclastic rebellion of Friedrich Nietzsche and Max Stirner, the erotic poetry of Walt Whitman, and the stirring dramas of oppression and resistance by Henrik Ibsen and Gerhard Hauptman. Fellow anarchist Alexander Berkman was her teacher and co-organizer as well as lifelong comrade.

Goldman wrote five books: *Anarchism and Other Essays* (1910) collected some of her strongest lectures and essays from her monthly journal *Mother Earth*; *The Social Significance of Modern Drama* (1914) collected her lectures on the political lessons and inspirations she found in selected European and American plays; *My Disillusionment in Russia* (1922) told the story of her initial enthusiasm and ultimate radical opposition to the Bolsheviks, who, in her view, had killed the authentic Russian revolution and replaced it with a new and even more exploitative state; *Foremost Russian Dramatist* (1926) was unpublished but served as the ground for her lectures on Russian theater; and her autobiography, *Living My Life* ([1931] 2006), was widely read in progressive circles. From 1906 to 1917, she edited and published the monthly anarchist journal *Mother Earth*. A popular and effective orator, she gave over 10,000 speeches in her lifetime to many thousands of listeners in the United States, Canada, and Europe. Also an irrepressible letter writer, she wrote over 200,000 letters to several hundred different correspondents.

While, from the point of view of the authorities, Goldman and her fellow anarchists were dangerous terrorists and lunatics, Goldman was a key actor in U.S. and European progressive politics. She forged alliances with a variety of liberals and socialists to address a plethora of issues. She called for sexual freedom and the decriminalization of prostitution as part of her critique of patriarchal marriage and the sexual double standard; she defended prostitutes as exploited workers and worked to make practical information about birth control available to working-class women. She worked tirelessly for freedom of speech, which was the backbone of political organizing, including union organizing. She opposed war and militarism, appealing to the international working class to eschew national

loyalties in favor of global class liberation. She supported radical labor actions against capitalists and the state, as well as anticolonial rebellions around the world. She participated in both the Russian and the Spanish revolutions.

Goldman was arrested countless times and served three prison terms in the United States: the first for encouraging unemployed workers to “take bread”; the second for breaking laws about obscenity by circulating information on birth control; and the third for opposing conscription during World War I. After her third prison term, she was deported to the Soviet Union; fleeing the growing Bolshevik tyranny, she eventually settled in the south of France, acquired British citizenship, and resumed her practice of traveling lecturer. She died of complications following a stroke in Montreal in 1940 while working for the release of anarchists who, if returned to their native Italy, would have been executed by the fascists.

Kathy Ferguson

See also [Anarchism](#); [Bakunin, Michael](#); [Feminism](#); [Kropotkin, Peter A.](#); [Nietzsche, Friedrich](#); [Libertarianism](#); [Russian Revolution](#), [Political Thought of the](#); [Stirner, Max](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [Utopianism](#)

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Gorz, André

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Hailed by Nicolas Sarkozy as a “major intellectual figure of the French and European Left,” André Gorz (1923–2007) would have been amused by this posthumous tribute from the center-right president of France. Though his intellectual impact was perhaps never greater than when he attacked an outdated and dogmatic Marxism in *Farewell to the Working Class* (1982), Gorz was an uncompromising critic of neoliberalism who repeatedly drew on Marx to expose the irrationalities of contemporary society. Strongly influenced by the existentialism of Jean-Paul Sartre, Gorz was first drawn to the radical syndicalism of Italian trade unionists, later embracing the libertarian ethos of May 1968 and spearheading the challenge to French nuclear energy and the critique of consumer capitalism. By the 1990s, Gorz had become Europe’s best-known advocate of the post-work or multi-activity society, a model he argued was becoming less and less utopian as the high-tech knowledge economy expanded. His most important political texts include *Strategy for Labor* (1967), *Ecology as Politics* (1980), *Paths to Paradise* (1985), *Critique of Economic Reason* ([1989] 2011), *Capitalism, Socialism, Ecology* (1994), *Reclaiming Work* (1999), and *The Immaterial* (2010).

Gorz’s original birth name was Gerhart Hirsch. Raised in bourgeois Vienna at a time of virulent anti-Semitism, his childhood was marked by feelings of illegitimacy that the discovery of his own paternal Jewish ancestry exacerbated. After the family name was changed to the more Germanic-sounding Horst, Gorz was sent by his mother to a Swiss boarding school to

avoid the consequences of the Nazi takeover of Austria. Graduating with a degree in chemical engineering in Lausanne, he moved with his English wife to Paris in 1949 and began forging a career as a political journalist. He wrote under the pseudonym Michel Bosquet, working first for *Paris-Presse*, then for *L'Express*, and finally for *Le Nouvel Observateur*, which he helped found in 1964. In the decade following the war, Gorz had also devoted his spare time to a philosophical study intended as a sequel to Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*. Though it would be twenty years before *Fondements pour une morale* (1977) was published, his subsequent decision to apply the insights of this treatise to himself and to turn the resulting self-analysis into an illuminating self-portrait, was a publishing success. Owing no small part to Sartre's lengthy preface, *The Traitor* (1960) catapulted Gorz—the pseudonym he chose for his books—into the Parisian limelight, paving the way for his recruitment to the editorial board of *Les Temps Modernes* and his membership in Sartre's and Simone de Beauvoir's inner circle. In his best-selling book, *Letter to D* (2009), Gorz returned to his biography. Written a year before he and his wife's joint suicide, the book told the story of the couple's life together, revisiting, often critically, the picture he had painted in *The Traitor* and explaining the precious role that his wife Dorine had played in his own life and thinking.

The most important political theme in Gorz's work is the idea of autonomy. This idea is theorized in Sartrean terms as the capacity of the individual to take charge of him- or herself and be a responsible agent. Influenced by his friendships with Ivan Illich and Herbert Marcuse, Gorz focused on the way modern systems of production and administration undermined people's ability to think and act for themselves, inducing passive, acquiescent, and functionalized forms of behavior. In *Farewell to the Working Class*, he warned that the labor movement, by failing to interrogate the ideology of work, was becoming an inverted replica of capital. In *Critique of Economic Reason*, he contrasted the anguished freedom of the posttraditional individual with the escape from the responsibilities of judgment promised by free-market capitalism and the sterile logic of economic calculation. Gorz displayed his own intellectual autonomy through his nonacademic style of writing, infuriating some critics by neglecting established bodies of work and leaning heavily on journalistic sources. He was also criticized for

being too utopian and for romanticizing the potential for social change carried by more marginal groups in society.

Gorz was a political ecologist who warned that conventional environmental science was perfectly compatible with an inhuman social system. Though he associated the most progressive demands of the ecology movement with the defense of vernacular life, he was an unapologetic French modernist, despising all cultural, religious, and even scientific fundamentalisms. In his later writings, he drew repeatedly on the “Fragment on Machines” in Karl Marx’s *Grundrisse*, using the text to explore, often with startling prescience, the crisis that ensues when capitalism tries to sustain the law of value while more and more of society’s wealth is produced and enjoyed outside the framework of measurable labor time. This view also led him to stress the need for a system of income distribution that disconnected purchasing power from the performance of work.

Finn Bowring

See also [Alienation](#); [Autonomy](#); [Capitalism](#); [Communism](#), [Varieties of Economics and Political Thought](#); [Environmentalism](#), [Ecology, and Political Thought](#); [French Political Thought](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Modernization](#); [Progress](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Gramsci, Antonio

Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937) was one of the twentieth century's most popular and influential Marxist figures. However, his influence has been almost entirely posthumous. Imprisoned in his native Italy by the fascist regime, Gramsci's ideas reached a wider audience only after his death when, from the late 1940s onward, the Italian Communist Party published his prison writings. Since then, his work has been translated and disseminated to a global audience. Offering a notably pragmatic approach to revolution, Gramsci highlighted the cultural and political factors that sustained class rule and advocated a strategy designed to tackle them. In his analysis of hegemony, or consensual domination, he offered a nuanced appreciation of the complexities of power in capitalist society that continues to inspire theorists today.

Early Years

Born in Ales, Sardinia, in 1891, Gramsci was the fourth of seven children of a middle-class family. A number of key events determined the early course of his life. Reportedly dropped as a baby, the young Antonio grew up a hunchback, with recurring poor health. Further, when he was seven, his father, a local civil servant, was imprisoned for several years in a corruption scandal. Consequently, the Gramsci family suffered financial difficulties, and Antonio missed some years of schooling. Although he returned to his studies after his father's release, these personal and familial problems

exposed Gramsci to the vicissitudes of life in Italy's underdeveloped southern regions. He never forgot this experience, and developed into a painfully self-conscious youth.

In 1911, he left Sardinia after winning a scholarship to the University of Turin. The sub-Alpine city was then one of Italy's major industrial centers, and it was there that Gramsci studied linguistics with the possible intention of becoming a teacher. However, in 1915, he left university, without graduating, to devote himself to full-time political journalism. A member of the Italian Socialist Party, Gramsci generated local notoriety as a biting critical intellectual and committed revolutionary.

Gramsci's early socialism was strongly influenced by idealist thought, then popular in Italy. The philosophy of Benedetto Croce, in particular, encouraged numerous radicals and aesthetes to view the world in subjective terms. Croce railed against scientific positivism with its reduction of human life to a natural phenomenon. Likewise, Gramsci, writing in party newspapers such as *Avanti!*, conceptualized revolution not as a natural event but as a process of spiritual adjustment, the formation of a moral consciousness, and self-discipline among the workers. This outlook contrasted with the dominant strain of positivist-inspired Marxism in the Socialist Party, which conceived revolution as an inevitable result of the laws of historical development purportedly discovered by Karl Marx. For Gramsci, however, it was necessary to prepare the workers for revolution through moral and cultural education, not passively await its arrival. Thus, in 1917, he famously described the Russian Revolution as a revolution “against *Das Kapital*”—that is, an example of how social change was activated through a conscious, disciplined assertion of the will.

The Factory Council Struggles

It was not until after World War I, however, that Gramsci came to greater prominence in his adopted city. In the aftermath of a traumatic and divisive war, which swelled the ranks of Turin's working class, he argued that revolution meant the creation of a new state. In light of growing industrial militancy through 1919 and 1920, particularly among Turin's metal workers

as well as the experience of the Soviets in Russia, Gramsci imagined the industrial factories as the location for a workers' state.

In the review he edited with his fellow socialist intellectuals—called *L'Ordine Nuovo*, or the new order—Gramsci followed the conflicts under way in the local factory councils (grievance committees for workers) and set out a corresponding theory of a socialist state based on the democratic management of production. Influenced by elements of syndicalism, Gramsci conceived the industrial factory, with its assembly lines and divisions of labor, as the ideal space for a distinctly proletarian unification of private and public spheres. The factory state, he argued, could develop its own sense of citizenship and civic consciousness centered on the common goal of production. For Gramsci, the self-management of production offered a wholly new revolutionary model, one formed within the very heart of industrial capitalism and, unlike the Italian socialist tradition, led by the workers themselves.

The eventual failure of the Turin workers' struggles, following a month-long occupation of the factories in September 1920, and the subsequent tide of reaction that saw the rise of Mussolini's fascists, encouraged Gramsci to switch direction. In 1921, he took part in the formation of the Communist Party. At the same time, however, the fascists were expanding their support among the middle classes, now deeply unsettled by the postwar conflicts and disillusioned with the liberal government's evident weakness. After a wave of antisocialist violence, Mussolini was invited by the King to become prime minister of Italy in 1922, bringing in a raft of repressive legislation. By 1926, he had virtually eliminated all serious opposition and set about creating his dictatorship.

The Communist Party

During the crisis and collapse of the liberal state, Gramsci had been absorbed in the politics of the new party. A member of its executive committee, he was posted for a while in communist Russia and later in Vienna. In this period away from Italy, he found time to recuperate from the exhaustion of the previous years and even to meet and marry his wife, Julia. But he observed with increasing dismay the inability of the Communist

Party to organize effectively in Italy. Gramsci had originally supported the Leninist idea of the revolutionary party as a disciplined vanguard leading the workers to revolution. But now he was concerned that the party remained too aloof from the lives and struggles of its potential supporters. Moreover, its strategy reflected a crude view of revolution as the outcome of economic conditions to which the party would then respond. Gramsci had long rejected this economism (the assumed determination of social change by economic conditions, regardless of particular circumstances), and he fought against it.

In 1923, Gramsci became party leader and set about developing a strategy he believed was appropriate to Italy's peculiar conditions. This strategy was set out formally in the "Lyons Theses" of January 1926—coauthored with Palmiro Togliatti—which highlighted the late and localized development of Italian capitalism in the north, the consequent impoverishment of the south, and the complexity of class relations there. The party, he argued, needed to lead a national movement that united the northern working class with the peasantry in the countryside. Later that year, Gramsci also penned "Some Aspects of the Southern Question," which reflected on the role of intellectuals such as Croce in mediating class relations in the south so providing cultural cohesion to the otherwise unstable Italian state. It was precisely that leadership role, Gramsci indicated, that the Communist Party should emulate by securing the support of radicalized intellectuals.

The Prison Writings

The authorities in Italy arrested Gramsci in November 1926 on trumped-up charges and sentenced him to twenty years in prison. Removed from the day-to-day activity of politics, he took the opportunity to reflect critically on the issues that had concerned him just before his arrest. Between 1929 and 1935, in a series of twenty-nine notebooks, he jotted down essays and comments, as well as reviews of articles and books he came across in the prison library or was sent from outside. Along with his letters, these notebooks form what are now known as his prison writings. Censored by the prison officials, and therefore often written in a coded language, they contain a vast, if unsystematic, collection of reflections, commentaries, and explorations of a range of themes related to Italian history and politics,

culture, and philosophy. Although he was afforded a chance to write, the authorities nevertheless neglected Gramsci's health, which deteriorated badly over the years and ultimately stopped him from continuing his studies.

Gramsci wrote and rewrote his notebooks, revising them and reordering their contents as he went along. While he touched upon a wide variety of topics, the guiding thread of his notebooks was undoubtedly the concept of hegemony. Signifying domination or leadership, hegemony joined together a series of Gramsci's concerns about how to conceptualize the revolutionary process. The concept was borrowed directly from Russian debates about working-class leadership of subordinate groups. But Gramsci added another dimension based on the Italian use of the word, implying cultural influence. Developed that way, Gramsci's usage of hegemony denoted a form of class power characterized by the active consent of allied groups and classes.

His use of the Machiavellian distinction between force and consent, common to Italian political discourse, implied that class rule involved a variation depending on the situation. Instead of Marxism's traditional model of politics, which understood the ruling class to exercise actual or threatened violence over the proletariat, Gramsci insisted on the importance of winning consent in modern capitalism. In this respect, the state was not only an instrument of force for the bourgeoisie, but also a device designed to develop agreement. Using the distinction between political society and civil society, he argued for an integral conception of the state that incorporated both the dimensions of force (the state in a narrow sense) and of hegemony (consent across civil society). This enlarged concept of the state encompassed a potentially shifting balance of force against enemies, who could not be won over, and consent from those who could.

How, according to Gramsci, was consent won? He suggested that hegemony entailed the dissemination of an ideological worldview, a shared intellectual and moral outlook that formed into a spontaneous common sense of unquestioned values and beliefs. Ideology, he argued was not, as Marxists often claimed, simply false knowledge or propaganda. It consisted in beliefs and values that gave shape to experience and was therefore bound up with the practical organization of life. By extending and then appealing

to this practical common sense, a class could exercise a form of leadership over groups that may otherwise oppose them. This was a subtle form of subjective control through which a leading class compromised its immediate economic-corporate interests to sustain a wider coalition. That way, potentially disaffected or excluded groups were encouraged to identify with a particular social order. Gramsci argued that it was the capacity of a class to extend its influence throughout the private and autonomous organizations of civil society rather than impose on them from above, which secured its hegemony. Often that meant infiltrating and refashioning already existing forms of common sense, shaping popular ideologies toward beliefs that endorsed a preferred organization of society.

At the center of Gramsci's reflections on hegemony was the category of the intellectuals. It was they who, for him, had a vital place in the formation of hegemony. Developing thoughts sketched before his arrest, Gramsci distinguished between organic and traditional types of intellectuals. All men, he argued, were intellectuals in so far as they processed thoughts, but only some had the social function of intellectuals. Organic intellectuals were those organizers of knowledge who were closest to their social class and who provided their members with an intellectual justification and identity. The traditional type, on the other hand, were those intellectuals left over from previous social orders, such as philosophers or ecclesiasts but who, such as Croce, retained a degree of prestige and authority. Both were important in generating and embedding hegemony through intellectual and moral guidance, developing forms of knowledge and ideological legitimacy for the social order. If the bourgeoisie once had entrepreneurs and businessmen to undertake this task, the working class now had technicians and engineers. Hegemony, argued Gramsci as a Marxist, was always rooted in the practical organization of economic life.

The prison writings also contain Gramsci's efforts to reframe Marxism as a general philosophy of politics. Once more opposing those who defended it as a science of society—in particular, the Russian Mikhail Bukharin—Gramsci argued for a Marxism sensitive to the politics of building hegemony. That meant rejecting economism—which reduced ideology and politics to a reflex of economic conditions—and incorporating an idealist outlook imported, in part, from Croce. Gramsci's notebooks contain

numerous critical encounters with Croce's liberal philosophy. Yet he broadly endorsed the philosopher's emphasis on subjectivity as an integral part of human engagement with historical circumstances. Marxism, he claimed, following the Italian philosopher Antonio Labriola, was a philosophy of praxis in which thought and action combined dialectically, not a science above history. As such, it required its proponents to understand the complexity involved in generating consent, the ebb and flow of ideological and political conditions, in addition to the economic structures of society.

Finally, Gramsci suggested how an alternative hegemony led by communists might be prepared. Still a committed Leninist, he understood the party to have the key role in leading workers to revolution. But his vision of the party, conceived as a "Modern Prince" (following Machiavelli, again) winning over intellectuals and disseminating ideology to build an alternative, consensual basis of support, went much further than Vladimir Illyich Lenin's narrow conception of the vanguard. Gramsci's party was expected to cultivate a new civilization with mass support through a war of position across civil society, holding off the inevitable moment of force (or war of maneuver) until the last minute. If this was certainly not an exclusively parliamentary road to revolution, nevertheless it was a distinctively gradualist conception.

Influence

Gramsci died in Rome in 1937 from a cerebral hemorrhage. He was forty-six years old. His writings were smuggled out of prison by his sister-in-law and eventually published. Since then, they have been instructive in various ways, despite (and possibly even because of) their fragmented nature. Suggestive and inventive rather than conceptually rigid, different remarks in his notebooks can be emphasized for contrasting purposes. Gramsci's attention to the so-called superstructures has influenced contemporary Marxist approaches to politics and the state. The theory of hegemony has provided a plausible explanation for the continued survival of capitalism and the failure of revolutionary politics in developed states. More recently, Gramsci's concepts have been extended to the fields of international relations and international political economy.

Despite his Leninism, Gramsci is regarded by many as a pluralistic and even democratic thinker. His arguments about hegemony, ideology, and common sense have been central to the conceptualization of popular culture as a form of resistance to dominant social groups. For some, he is even a forerunner of postmodern theories of power and discourse and anticipates a post-Marxist interest in social movements.

James Martin

See also [Civil Society](#); [Class](#); [Communism](#), [Varieties of](#); [Croce, Benedetto](#); [Ideology](#); [Italian Political Thought](#); [Lenin and Leninism](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Russian Revolution](#), [Political Thought of the](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Thomas Hill (T. H.) Green (1836–82) was the first of what has come to be called the British idealists, a philosophical movement that did much to influence the development of metaphysics, ethics, political philosophy, and aesthetics between the mid-1870s and the late-1920s. As a Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford, and from 1878 Whyte's Professor of Moral Philosophy, Green taught many of those who became leading figures in the movement (e.g., Bernard Bosanquet, Francis H. Bradley, Richard L. Nettleship, David G. Ritchie, Arnold Toynbee) and was a close friend to others including Edward Caird. Politically, Green was an Advanced Liberal with radical leanings, something that was reflected in his adherence to a form of republicanism combining ideas from evangelicalism, Thomas Carlyle, the Christian Socialists, Giuseppe Mazzini, and others. Green adopted many radical positions throughout his life. Domestically, he argued for reform of terms and conditions at work to help protect workers, land reform, liberalization of divorce laws, women's education, and temperance reform, as well as advocating the growth of responsible trade union action as a replacement for the Poor Law, which he saw as a morally corrupting institution that served to entrench the current servile position of the working classes. He also worked for the extension of the franchise in the lead-up to the (1867) Second Reform Act. He supported Mazzini's position during the Italian Risorgimento, opposed the slave-owning South in the American Civil War, and opposed British involvement in the Crimean War. He was elected twice as a town councilor in Oxford. An estimated two thousand

mourners attended his funeral, following his unexpected death from blood poisoning in March 1882.

Personality, Self-Realization, and Freedom

Green embraced ancient Greek and German philosophy from early in his intellectual life, probably as a result of reading Carlyle whose analysis of the social problem also influenced him greatly. While many of Green's published works focus on the philosophies of Aristotle, Immanuel Kant, and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, he became increasingly critical of both Kant and Hegel. The founding principles of his major philosophical work, *Prolegomena to Ethics* (written 1878–82, published posthumously 1883), show striking similarities to those defended by Johann Gottlieb Fichte in the 1790s, particularly a shared emphasis on the self-projection and self-realization of the “I” through active participation in social and economic institutions. Such a debt to idealism has led to a great many misunderstandings of Green's (and Fichte's) philosophy. Despite what some critics have alleged, Green and the other British idealists did not deny the existence of an external world. They held merely that it was unknowable to human beings. As Green put it habitually, the only world that can exist for us is the world that we know, and the only world in which we can act and upon which we can reflect critically is one that is shaped by the ideas through which we make sense of ourselves, others, and the environment in which we interact. Entailed by this position is Green's contention that society's institutions exist only through the attitudes that persons have to one another. This idea applies to social institutions such as the family and to economic institutions such as the right to private property, as well as to political institutions such as the state. The institutions embody ideas regarding the nature of persons, including what those persons are and how they should be treated. By participating in institutions, the individual comes to internalize and then reflect on these ideas. These processes bring out and give content to meanings and values latent within the individual, even if he or she does so in a confused manner that causes unease and alienation for the individual. Green understands this process as one in which the divine element immanent within each human being (which he calls the “spiritual principle” or the “eternal consciousness”) is brought out in the world in determinate, changing, and historically situated ways. Green's tendencies to

refer to the individual as a vehicle for the eternal consciousness, and to this process as one whereby God is manifested in the world, has led many scholars to see Green's philosophy as relying upon a form of mysticism. Others read the eternal consciousness as Green's conception of a latent human nature (a phrase Green himself uses in this context), which requires social interaction if it is to be developed in the world. On this second reading, Green's position is far closer to theories of alienation such as one finds in other offshoots of Aristotelianism and Hegelianism, including Marxism.

Green holds that every interaction between individuals is fundamentally a process whereby each party expresses some feature or features of him- or herself and becomes aware of the other participant's interpretations of and reactions to those features. He sees this process of what some now call (rather misleadingly) intersubjective recognition as being central to the individual's changing self-understanding and indeed to the gradual formation of his or her personal identity. In forming one's self in this way, one is also coming to embody certain meanings and values, the most significant of which have always been latent within one's underlying human nature (the eternal consciousness). In a sense, Green combines the philosophies of Kant and Aristotle. He holds that, ultimately, any act an individual performs is moral to the extent that he or she, as a rational being, performs it out of reverence for a categorical imperative. To this Kantian claim, Green adds the further Aristotelian claim that a society is enriching only to the extent that it allows the individual to develop his or her highest potentials to be wise, courageous, self-disciplined, and just. None of these potentials can be specified in abstraction from determinate cultural contexts. What it was to be virtuous for an ancient Greek differs from what it is to be virtuous now. (Green believes that whereas courage was reserved for the soldier in ancient Greece, it extends to the social reformer in mid-Victorian Britain.) Even within a particular society at a particular time, precise specifications of the requirements of virtue will vary depending on the individuals concerned, their history, character, and circumstances. Consequently, the person who can best decide how any particular responsible adult should act is that individual him- or herself, not the state or the society.

Bound up with this argument is Green's theory of freedom. In his famous essay "Two Concepts of Liberty" (1958), the intellectual historian Isaiah Berlin accused Green of believing that an agent was positively free to the extent that he or she performs actions that are in his or her real interests. On Berlin's reading of Green's theory, in principle acting out of fear of punishment by the state was just as free in a positive sense as acting out of one's own conscientious judgment. Berlin's accusation has been discredited by contemporary scholars. In reality, Green held to a modified Pauline conception of true, real, or positive freedom: an action is free in this highest sense of freedom to the extent that the agent performing it subjectively seeks the attainment of an object or end that is truly valuable and does so because it is truly valuable. As has been noted above, which particular objects or ends are truly valuable depend of the agent's character and context, and the person who is best placed to identify them is the agent him- or herself, by consulting his or her conscience and personal feelings of alienation or satisfaction.

This is a controversial position in a number of ways. One is the degree to which it appears society reaches into the individual—that is, the extent to which each of us is a product of our society. One response is that Green is concerned with free action, which he places outside the sphere of instinctive action. Indeed, at times he anticipates Sigmund Freud's theory of sublimation, whereby animal instincts are transformed in ways that benefit the agent as a socially situated being with higher capacities (anger manifests itself as indignation at social injustice, something that drives the reformer).

The Common Good, Rights, Duties, and Obligations

Green's Kantianism is further evident in his claim that ultimately an individual can only truly value a way of life to the extent that it arises out of processes that either presuppose or explicitly affirm the moral worth of all the participants. To the extent that it does not do so, the individual will always feel some degree of self-alienation. Consequently, a society is enriching to the extent that it is what Kant called a "kingdom of ends." Green believed that when combined with the need for intersubjective

recognition and the contextualized specification of one's highest capacities and needs, truly valuable actions always aim ultimately to secure ends that the individual enjoys as a member of his or her community. The internal complexity of modern communities helps rather than hinders the development of their members. Different substate institutions and associations draw together different people to realize different ends or common goods. In so doing, they foster a range of skills and virtues in their members. A healthy society is a network of such associations structured by an overarching (necessarily more general) common good.

Most, if not all, contemporary scholars hold that Green goes too far by claiming that every valuable action serves common goods of this type. Nevertheless, Green is correct in relation to a very important set of cases: those relating to the individual's civil, economic, and political rights. For example, living within a free society is a common good. It is not enough that others and I do not happen to be, say, silenced at any particular moment. Rather, a free society is one in which each of us is assured of not being silenced and feels that assurance because we know our fellow citizens recognize a right to free expression. The precise nature and limits of the right to free speech will vary between societies depending on their history and circumstances. In this sense, rights emerge from and structure the interactions of members of one's society. For this reason, Green argues that while one can claim a right against the state, one cannot claim a right against society. Here, it is vital to appreciate that Green is describing the nature of rights, rather than justifying them. He is not claiming that all conventional rights should be upheld and enforced simply because they are conventional. The continued existence of all rights (and indeed any other normatively significant entities) does suggest that they are endorsed by members of society, or else they would fade away as individuals failed to ascribe any practical weight to them. Nevertheless, the citizen should always reflect critically on the value and relevance of conventional meanings and values. Where he or she believes society is not living up to its highest principles, the reformer has a duty to push for improvement including the modification of conventional meanings and values (see below).

Green extends and deepens his position by distinguishing between moral rights and duties on the one hand, and legal rights and obligations, on the other. Legal rights and obligations are not simply moral rights and duties enforced through law. Indeed, some moral rights and duties would be destroyed if they were enforced legally. As noted above, virtuous action requires the individual to act from a (Kantian) good will, something that requires the individual to act out of reverence for the moral law, rather than from fear of legal punishment. Nevertheless, legal enforcement is required in those instances where it is important that certain actions are performed (or abstained from) irrespective of the agent's motive. Ultimately, only the state has the authority to decide which rights and obligations should be recognized legally. It should do so by considering the practices prevalent in the society at the time and the goals to be achieved by giving legal force to rights and so on.

Conscientious Citizenship, Democracy, and Economic Power

The diversity of substate associations and values ensures that society's common good is continually contested. This fits with Green's prioritization of contextualized personal judgment. He is very concerned that every individual should constantly question, and where necessary work to reform, established social, economic, and political structures. Green's position is not motivated simply by pragmatic concerns. As has been noted, he holds personal conscience to be the partial manifestation of the eternal consciousness within the individual. Consulting one's conscience is a vital part of each of these critical processes. Philosophy can provide at best a static understanding of existing structures, rather than definite guidance for practical reform. Only the engaged, conscientious individual can grasp what change is needed and how to best go about achieving it. Consequently, the primary role of the philosopher is analysis not prescription. This belief that one does not need to be a specialist to help moral knowledge to develop over time underpins much of Green's respect for ordinary members of the working class. It runs counter to the often unconscious elitism that continues to inform the attitudes that many other normative and applied philosophers hold regarding the significance of their discipline.

Yet, for Green, the individual's conscience reflects the individual's particular perspective, and as such, it sees only part of the picture. The more perspectives that are taken into account, the more complete the picture, and therefore, the better the final judgment. It is for this reason that, in 1867, Green advocated the extension of the franchise to all men living in cities. He hesitated about calling for the extension of the franchise to women and to the agricultural poor on the ground that currently too many members of both groups were kept in a state of childlike ignorance and naivety. It was for this reason that Green worked for the extension of higher education to women and the poor, as well as for the reform of the divorce laws to empower women. Moreover, it underpinned his support for temperance reform. He pushed for the immediate extension of democratic control of local and municipal government, having far greater trust than John Stuart Mill in the ability of working classes to control their own neighborhoods. He did not wish the middle classes to inculcate the workers into middle-class beliefs about how to govern. Instead, the poor should be trusted to rule as they see fit, for example, in relation to the issuing of liquor licenses and other matters of local, municipal, and national importance.

Green's faith in the working classes extended into the economic sphere. He believed that capitalism could be made to function as a fair system of production. Nevertheless, he saw vividly the injustices of many existing laws that gave capitalists and landowners powers to impose abusive conditions on their workers and tenants. Even though it has been claimed that Green's philosophy laid the foundations of the welfare state, he himself saw the Poor Law as discouraging the poor from asserting themselves against employers and landowners through trade union action, as well as leaving them at the mercy of a patchy and unreliable system of charitable provision. Nevertheless, Green recognized that, prior to the development of an effective trade union movement, the Poor Law remained necessary. He was also a fervent supporter of the cooperative movement, pushing for workers to band together in associations to purchase goods in bulk and therefore at a discounted price. These practical solutions embody the core principles and aspirations of Green's political thought: that by using the state and popular associations to empower individual conscience, collective action would help to liberate the poor and vulnerable from the exploitation and cruelty of the economically and socially powerful. In this way, an

enriching community could be brought into being via the popularly driven reform of one's existing institutions and practices.

Colin Tyler

See also [Alienation](#); [Citizenship](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Feminism](#); [Hegelianism](#); [Idealism](#); [Kant, Immanuel](#); [Liberalism](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [State, Theories of the](#)

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Guild Socialism

Guild socialism

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Guild Socialism

Guild socialism was developed in Britain between 1907 and 1923. It was a system of ideas driven mainly by socialist intellectuals who felt uninspired by what the Labour Party and the Fabian Society had to offer but who were also fearful of the revolutionary turmoil championed by Marxists and syndicalists. Guild socialism was, in many ways, a compromise between the paternalism of state socialism and the anger and energy of revolutionary socialism. Its main advocates included Arthur Penty, Alfred Orage, Samuel Hobson, and G. D. H. Cole. Writing in such journals as *The New Age*, *The Guildsman*, *The Church Socialist*, and in some key texts (see Further Readings), the guild socialists helped to draw attention to the problems and limitations of both state socialism and revolutionary socialism. Although guild socialism as a distinct body of thought had faded by 1923, the spirit of guild socialism can be detected in the ideas of the New Left and in Green political thought.

Many forms of guild socialism rested upon an economic and ethical critique of the wage system. The wage system was criticized for exploiting and dehumanizing workers by treating their labor as a commodity that could be bought, sold, and discarded in the interests of profit. According to John Hobson, the wage system rendered workers servile by stripping them of their humanity. This servitude in turn made workers less likely to want to engage in broader political activities and allowed a minority of active citizens to impose their will. The alternative consisted in establishing a system of guaranteed payment to enhance the material security of workers

and to remind workers of the importance of their labor for their own spiritual well-being. Once liberated from the economic and spiritual torment of the wage system, it was hoped that the workers would become active citizens and help to transform the political system.

The guild socialists believed workers needed to unite and undermine the wage system through union activity. Rather than strike for higher pay, unions were to demand the right to discipline their own workers and to distribute pay to their members. A contract would thus be formed between employers and unions that would sever the link between employers and individual workers. Further concessions could then be demanded until the employers were deprived of all of their functions. By then, the employers would no longer be able to justify their ownership of companies, and it was felt that entire industries would, in this way, be made suitable for state ownership.

Many of the guild socialists wanted to establish a system of state ownership and worker control of industry. Although the state was to own industry, it was felt that a system of nationalization in which industries would be run by politicians and by bureaucracies imposed by the state would do little to liberate workers from the shackles and psychological damage inflicted by the wage system.

The guild socialists, as their name indicates, wanted to place industry under the control of guilds. Guilds had existed since medieval times to protect workers from unfair competition. While some guild socialists were in favor of restoring these local craft guilds, the majority of guild socialists called for the formation of national guilds run by the workers in each industry with responsibilities toward the community. By depriving the state of the obligation to run nationalized industries, it was hoped that the state could turn its attention to other functions. For Hobson, the state should focus its attention upon the broader spiritual welfare of the nation. For Cole, it was important for the state to represent the interests of consumers.

Although the guild socialists believed that the socialist transformation of society would transform the values held by workers, they wanted to make sure that the community was protected from any selfish or antisocial activities on the part of the guilds. While the guild socialists were more

willing than state socialists to extend the powers of the working class, the limits they wanted to place on the working class distanced them from many Marxists.

Gary Taylor

See also [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Hobson, John Atkinson](#); [Radicalism](#); [Socialism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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H

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Habermas, Jürgen

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Habermas, Jürgen

Jürgen Habermas (1929–) is one of the most influential German social philosophers of the twentieth century. Besides his academic work, he regularly contributes to political debates, often playing the part of the liberal conscience of Germany. A staunch defender of Enlightenment principles, he sees modernity as an “unfinished project” that needs to be protected from neoconservative and postmodern critics who attack and undermine the principles of Western liberal democracies. Habermas’s most important works include *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* ([1962] 1989), *Knowledge and Human Interests* ([1968] 1998), *The Theory of Communicative Action* (1981), *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* ([1985] 1987), and *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy* ([1992] 1996). In addition, he regularly publishes his political opinions in newspapers and magazines.

The scion of a West German middle-class family, Habermas grew up in Gummersbach. He was drafted into the German army in the later stages of World War II. The chaos of postwar Germany and the revelations about Nazi atrocities left a lasting impression on Habermas and helped determine his future political stance. From 1949 to 1954, he studied philosophy, history, psychology, and German literature at the universities of Göttingen, Zurich, and Bonn. In 1954, he graduated with a doctorate in philosophy on Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, supervised by the philosopher Erich Rothacker, and worked as a freelance journalist before joining the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt in 1956, where he became an assistant of

Theodor W. Adorno. Having lost the confidence of Institute Director Max Horkheimer, however, he moved to the University of Marburg, where he defended his *Habilitation* on the structural transformation of the public sphere, supported by the political scientist Wolfgang Abendroth. In this historical-philosophical study, Habermas developed a notion of free public discourse as the backbone of liberal society. In 1961, he became professor of philosophy at the University of Heidelberg, and in 1964, he returned to Frankfurt, where he succeeded Horkheimer in the chair of sociology and philosophy. From 1971 until 1983, he was codirector, together with the physicist Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker, of the Max-Planck-Institute for the Study of the Conditions of Life in the Scientific-Technical World at Starnberg, Bavaria. During this time, Habermas underwent his own linguistic turn, absorbed the philosophy of language and linguistics, and produced his magnum opus, the two-volume *Theory of Communicative Action*, in which he formulated a consensual theory of “discourse” and the “ideal speech situation” as the foundation of society. In 1983, he returned to the University of Frankfurt as professor of sociology, teaching there until 1994. Since his retirement, he has continued to contribute regularly to political debates, most recently in a dialogue with Pope Benedict XVI on the role of religion in a secularized world.

While working at the Institute for Social Research, Habermas had contributed to an empirical study on university students’ attitudes toward politics, criticizing the apathetic nature of the “skeptical generation” of the 1950s. In the 1960s, Habermas’s unorthodox Marxism made him a popular figure with the West German student movement, which he in turn supported in their critique of the existing liberal order of the Federal Republic of Germany. While Habermas grew increasingly concerned about the radicalism of the left-wing students and accused them of leftist fascism, he kept defending the upsurge of student activism of 1968 for its positive effects on the political culture of West Germany. In 1973, Habermas edited an important study on the crisis of legitimation in capitalist societies. In the 1980s, he started a much-publicized debate about the singularity of the Holocaust when he rejected attempts by neoconservative historians to normalize the official view of German history. Instead, Habermas urged his fellow countrymen to adopt a postnational identity. Borrowing a concept from the political scientist Dolf Sternberger, Habermas presented

constitutional patriotism as the only option open for postwar Germans. Consequently, Habermas became an enthusiastic proponent of a unified Europe but remained critical of the unification of the two German states in 1990.

Habermas's influences are as varied as his large oeuvre: well-versed in the traditions of philosophical idealism, he was much influenced by, but also highly critical of, Martin Heidegger's existentialism. In line with the tradition of the Frankfurt school and mediated by Herbert Marcuse, he combined theories of the early Karl Marx with Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis. His focus on language and discourse are the product of his reception of the philosophy of the late Wittgenstein, of American pragmatism (Charles S. Peirce, George Herbert Mead, John Dewey), and the philosophy of language (J. L. Austin, John Searle, Noam Chomsky). From the 1970s, Habermas critically reviewed the systems theory of the German sociologist Niklas Luhmann. In the 1980s, he was influenced, by way of critical reception, by French poststructuralism, notably Jacques Derrida, Jean-François Lyotard, and Michel Foucault. Translations and regular invitations as a guest professor at American universities have made Habermas one of the best-known and most widely discussed German social philosophers of the second half of the twentieth century.

Egbert Klautk

See also [Civil Society](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Frankfurt School](#); [Freud and Social Theory](#); [German Political Thought](#); [Heidegger, Martin](#); [Liberalism](#); [Marcuse, Herbert](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Modernization](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Social Democracy](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Gordon Bannerman Gordon Bannerman

Hamilton, Alexander

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Hamilton, Alexander

As an early American statesman, Founding Father, economist, and political philosopher, Alexander Hamilton (1755 or 1757–1804) has many claims to fame. Hamilton is perhaps best known as the principal author, along with James Madison and John Jay, of *The Federalist Papers*, a series of articles of fundamental importance in American constitutional history, but Hamilton was also an influential politician and political economist whose views were crucially important in providing the ideological framework of the American Republic.

The illegitimate son of a Scottish merchant, Hamilton was born in Nevis, in the British West Indies. After serving a commercial apprenticeship, he studied at King's College (now Columbia University), New York, and precociously wrote two pamphlets, *A Full Vindication of the Measures of Congress* (1774) and *The Farmer Refuted* (1775), which displayed an impressive grasp of the principles of constitutional government. During the war of independence, Hamilton served as a field commander and then as George Washington's secretary and advisor. At the end of the war, he became politically active, and as a delegate to the Annapolis Convention of 1786 who was dissatisfied with the Articles of Confederation, he drafted the call for the 1787 Federal Constitutional Convention to formulate a new Constitution.

Hamilton was principal author of a series of articles arguing for the inadequacy of the Confederation, and for the ratification of a new, federal

constitution. This series of essays, in *The Federalist* (1787–88), subsequently known as *The Federalist Papers*, was intended to secure support for the new Constitution but also became a classic commentary on American constitutional law. Hamilton's advocacy of a strong, centralized federal government was approved by Washington, and as proponents of the new Constitution, the Federalists were politically dominant throughout the 1790s. Like many of the revolutionary founders favoring the ouster of the British colonial government, Hamilton later became an advocate for strong governmental power over popular democracy.

In 1789, Washington chose Hamilton as secretary of the treasury, a position from which he presented a highly influential succession of policy proposals on public credit, exchange, and debt. Hamilton's *Report on Manufactures* (1791) called for a protective tariff to encourage American "infant industries," a policy designed to increase the interdependence of states and strengthen the Union. Hamilton's call for the establishment of a national bank, industrial tariffs, bounties for agriculture, and a network of internal improvements promoted by the federal government, similarly aimed at promoting a strong federal political structure and a key role for the national government in promoting the economic development of the new nation. Hamilton argued that as more advanced nations could operate more efficiently and crucially, more cheaply, than emerging new nations, the trading relationship between agricultural and manufacturing nations always favored the latter. As foreign demand for American agricultural produce was casual and occasional, because of distance, taste, and high freight costs, Hamilton feared that with a predominantly agricultural economy, America would suffer a permanent trading disadvantage.

Hamilton therefore argued that the United States ought not to be dependent on Europe for manufactured goods and should possess the ability to produce all essential goods. Hence, he called for the establishment of a regulatory system of protective duties and import prohibitions for industry. Although most of his proposals were adopted, Hamilton resigned his post in 1795 after failing to obtain his protective tariff. Nevertheless, his economic ideas proved to be highly influential as the economic role of the national government steadily increased with the growth of the U.S. population. In the nineteenth century, the American economists Henry Clay and Henry

Carey elaborated on Hamilton's theories, viewing British free trade as a commercial system leading to tyranny and slavery for the rest of the world.

Hamilton's federalism and his commercial proposals received support from financial and mercantile interests in the North and served to create opposition to the political philosophy of Thomas Jefferson. The Jeffersonian system favored the rights of individual states and in favoring an agrarian republic of smallholders, assumed agriculture to be the basis of the American economy. Unlike Jefferson, Hamilton distrusted local self-government and popular democracy, and he used his formidable intellectual powers and administrative skills to advance the cause of a strong and centralized federal government. During the administration of John Adams (1797–1801) these ideological differences led to the emergence of two distinct political parties, with the Federalists led by Hamilton opposed by Jefferson and Madison's new Republican-Democratic Party.

Hamilton's political theory was largely determined by the demands of creating a new political framework for the young republic. He was not a pure theorist, nor was he the founder of any school. Nevertheless, for his role in advocating and forging the central components of the American Constitution and American financial and commercial policy, Hamilton continues to be an influential figure. For over two centuries, the two prime contenders in American political thinking have been the Hamiltonian preference for a vigorous and powerful national government and the Jeffersonian call for decentralized, participatory democracy. Hamilton's contribution toward constitutional law, especially in the *Federalist Papers*, was part of his political legacy, and it continues to exert an influence on constitutional theory and practice, often referred to by policy makers, lawyers, and historians in interpreting the constitutional propriety of Supreme Court decisions.

Gordon Bannerman

See also [Adams, John](#); [American Political Thought](#); [Cobden, Richard](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Federalism](#); [Federalist Papers](#); [Jefferson, Thomas](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Washington, George](#)

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James F. Pontuso James F. Pontuso

Havel, Václav

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Havel, Václav

Václav Havel (1936–2011) was born in Prague on October 5, 1936, into a successful entrepreneurial and political family. Havel's advantaged life ended in 1948 when the newly ascendant communist government seized his family's property. Havel's bourgeois background made him suspect, and he was denied admittance to university in his chosen area of the arts. Despite a paucity of formal training, he entered the theater, eventually rising to fame as a dramaturge and especially as a playwright in the style of the theater of the absurd.

Havel's theatrical career was interrupted when Warsaw Pact forces invaded Czechoslovakia in 1968 to put down the Prague Spring, an initiative dedicated to opening up the communist system by granting greater freedom. Havel came to prominence in the aftermath of the Soviet occupation during the era of normalization, a dull, depressing period in which communists kept power by thwarting spontaneity, personal initiative, and deviation from the Soviet model. Havel's avant-garde plays were banned, and he was barred from the theater.

Havel turned his energies toward social activism by helping to found Charter 77, the leading human rights organization in the communist world. He penned essays promoting opposition to communism, including his best-known work, "The Power of the Powerless." It attacks communism as antithetical to the variety and complexity of human life. In Havel's view, communism's goal of utterly transforming the human condition inevitably

became a merciless ideology. Under the dictatorship of Joseph Stalin, Marxist ideals had been used to justify the most heinous crimes. After Stalin's crimes were fully exposed in the 1970s, few Czechs (or others) continued to believe in the communist dream, but powerful centralized governments and arrogant bureaucracies persisted throughout the communist world. He argued that the communist ideology forced people to pretend that they believed. The central fact of would-be totalitarian rule under communism was the lie; Havel called his resistance toward it "living in truth." For opposition to government policies, his peculiar plays, and his defense of a banned rock group, Havel was imprisoned several times and once for many years.

Havel also criticized the dominant principles of contemporary Western civilization, whether socialist or capitalist, as materialist and relativistic, implying that moral judgments have no ultimate truth but are socially constructed or are matters of personal choice. Havel argued instead that judgments about good and evil are based in the phenomena of daily life, what he calls the natural world. In the natural world, principles such as love, honor, justice, and friendship become evident—they are inevitably part of the human condition, as are selfishness, envy, cruelty, and hate.

Havel's plays, suppressed by the communist authorities but translated and performed internationally, are in the tradition of absurdist theater created by Eugene Ionesco and Samuel Beckett. Plays such as *The Memorandum* (1965) and *Largo Desolato* (1984) attempt to capture the loss of identity, which might be defined as the absence of a relationship beyond one's physical existence. They expose the absurdity of modern bureaucracy as well as the moral and psychological ambivalence of leaders, whether official or rebel. In the symbolically autobiographical *Largo Desolato*, Havel turns his critical acumen on himself and by extension, other leaders of the people. Not only should ordinary citizens resist oppressive state authority, but also they should avoid dependence on heroic populist leaders like himself. Yet his plays do not proclaim the meaninglessness of existence, but endeavor, instead, to highlight the complexity of life and the absurdity of antifoundationalism, or relativism. The plays present the awareness of meaning's absence but simultaneously the abiding human longing for meaning. No society has ever existed without a moral code;

hence, moral guidelines are a natural part of life. Yet no society is fully moral; hence, nature does not dictate or ensure morality. Life is a constant tension between the poles of meaning and nothingness. To surrender our judgment entirely to strict moral codes makes us too self-righteous and blind to life's complexities, but to yield to nothingness leads to disempowerment and hopelessness. Being discloses itself partially to us. We get a hint of what is proper and fitting, but not a roadmap. If we were given too much, there would be no choice and therefore, no freedom or dignity.

In 1989, Havel became the first postcommunist president of Czechoslovakia, using his official position as a bully pulpit to promote social responsibility. As president, he took the bold and controversial action of granting amnesty to political prisoners, including many communists. Havel proposed constructing civil societies at the local level, at which moral responsibilities are experienced personally by citizens seeing the needs, hopes, and desires of their fellow human beings. Although Havel opposed the 1992 breakup of Czechoslovakia into the Czech Republic and Slovakia, he was elected to serve two terms as president of the Czech Republic from 1993 to 2003.

In addition to serving his homeland, Havel became a political and intellectual figure of international renown, befriending the Dalai Lama, taking U.S. President Bill Clinton to Prague's Reduta Jazz Club (where Clinton played the saxophone), receiving the U.S. Presidential Medal of Freedom and many other awards, and addressing the U.S. Congress to overwhelming acclaim.

Havel used his fame to promote a restructuring of politics so that people can experience the fulfillment of citizens taking part in small, tightly knit communities, realize their authentic selves, and enjoy the safety of an integrated and peaceful world.

After retirement from politics, Havel published *To the Castle and Back*, one of the oddest and most ironic political memoirs ever penned. In 2008, he wrote his first play in 20 years, *Leaving*, a tragicomedy about a former political leader. *Dozens of Cousins*, a short sequel to his earlier plays about the character Vaněk, appeared in 2010.

At his death in December of 2011, Havel was serving as chair of the international Human Rights Foundation, based in New York. He was remembered by expatriate Czech novelist Milan Kundera (The *Unbearable Lightness of Being*): “Vaclav Havel’s greatest work is his own life.”

James F. Pontuso

See also [Civil Society](#); [Communism](#), [Varieties of](#); [Global Civil Society](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Social Democracy](#); [Stalin and Stalinism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Jeremy Shearmur Jeremy Shearmur

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Hayek, Friedrich

Friedrich Hayek (1899–1992) was an important twentieth-century political theorist who played a key role in the revival of classical liberalism after World War II and was subsequently influential in the 1980s during the administrations of U.S. President Ronald Reagan and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

Education and Early Career

Hayek studied law and economics at the University of Vienna, where he worked with Friedrich von Wieser. He subsequently spent a short period in the United States and then returned to Vienna where he worked with and was influenced by Ludwig von Mises. Hayek in his earlier years was sympathetic to moderate Fabian socialism. Von Mises's criticism of the feasibility of socialism in his article on the problems of economic calculation under socialism, and in his large critical book *Socialism*, made a significant impact on Hayek. While Hayek was not fully in agreement with von Mises's arguments, he found himself becoming increasingly drawn to his conclusions.

Hayek was recruited to the London School of Economics (LSE) in 1931, where he and Lionel Robbins formed the core of a group interested in distinctive approaches to the understanding of capital and the trade cycle. They drew on the Austrian tradition and on the work of Swedish economist

Knud Wicksell. However, almost all of those who had been close to Hayek gradually moved away from him under the impact of John Maynard Keynes.

During the 1930s, Hayek was critical—as was Robbins—of the kind of inductivist, empiricist approaches to economics that were popular and were pressed on them by William Beveridge, the director of the LSE. Hayek diagnosed these ideas as influenced by a tendency to uncritically imitate what were claimed to be the methods of the natural sciences and saw them as interconnected to the methodological ideas of the younger German historical school of economics. He had a strong aversion to this approach, as it seemed to him to deprive economic theory of the important role of indicating constraints on social reform. Hayek discussed these issues in his inaugural address at the LSE and was led into wider issues in social theory and the methodology of social science. He gradually formed plans for a critical study of the history, intellectual faults, and likely consequences, of the ideas of which he was critical in a project (“The Abuse of Reason”) on which he worked in the latter part of the 1930s and in the early 1940s. To pursue this line of study, he largely turned his back on his earlier work in economics, work that had run into technical difficulties.

This earlier work on economics was in the tradition of general equilibrium theory and tried to deal with money in such a context and to discuss trade cycles. Hayek was led, however, by his reflections on problems of economic calculation under socialism, to place stress on the way in which markets coordinate knowledge that is socially scattered and not available to the would-be central planner. Further, drawing in part on Michael Polanyi’s parallel arguments against planning in science, Hayek stressed the way in which some knowledge that was tacit, and could not be articulated, could be fed into decision making in a market economy.

Major Works on Political and Social Themes

Hayek turned increasingly to work on social and political themes. His *Road to Serfdom*—which was written as a popularization of ideas that he had intended to treat in more detail as part of his larger project—caused a stir when it was published in 1944. It is best read as an argument that calls for

economic planning, or the continuation of wartime planning into peacetime, and was liable to have the unintended consequence of putting people's freedom in jeopardy, of undermining democracy, and of having an adverse effect on the economy and could thus at least inadvertently promote totalitarianism. Hayek did not spell out his more positive views in detail, but some things were clear. His work represented a defense of classical liberalism and a so-called *Rechtsstaat* view of the rule of law (close to that of modern republicans such as Philip Pettit). However, he also favored a safety-net conception of a welfare state and favored various other kinds of (limited) governmental intervention in the economy and society more generally. His concern was that such measures—and other social goals—should be pursued in ways that would not lead to the dire consequences that he thought would eventuate from contemporary calls for planning.

Hayek's book received a good, but not uncritical, reception in Britain. However, a popularization in the *Readers' Digest* and its mass dissemination led to *The Road to Serfdom*'s being the topic of considerable controversy in the United States. In Britain, the popularized version made a strong personal impact on Antony Fisher, who was to go on to found Britain's Institute of Economic Affairs, and on a network of free-market think tanks across the world. Keynes, whom Hayek had got to know well while the LSE was in wartime exile in Cambridge, responded in a friendly way to the book, but teased Hayek by saying that the interventionist aspects of his own views were in danger of placing him on the road to serfdom. Some of Hayek's later work in political theory offers a response to this problem.

Before we turn to this work, however, it is important to note that while one feature of Hayek's *Road to Serfdom* was that he embraced the idea of critically improving our inherited institutions (a theme that he was later to relate to Karl Popper's critical rationalism), there were also two themes in his "Abuse of Reason" project that contrasted with this idea. The first is that we may inherit social institutions that are not consciously designed, and that perform important social functions the existence and character of which we may not properly recognize. Hayek, in works that formed part of this project, seemed to suggest that we needed to be concerned about damaging such things, and these ideas sometimes led him in antirationalist and

conservative directions. Second, when he reflected on the methodology of social science, he drew on some ideas about psychology that he had developed as a student as a result of reflections on the work of Ernst Mach. These reflections he was later to write up as his *Sensory Order*, and they may also be related to his later ideas on methodology and in social theory, about the significance of rules that are unconsciously followed, both for society and as imposing limitations on our understanding. All this made for an interesting but not always coherent mixture, which was later added to by his development of evolutionary themes in which he pictured rules and certain social orders as having come about because they helped people to thrive and more importantly, to stay alive, but which people typically did not understand and which might often be in tension with their more explicit moral ideas. It was interesting to find that while Hayek explained in “Why I Am Not a Conservative,” an appendix to his *Constitution of Liberty*, Hayek’s old friend Lionel Robbins dissented strongly from what might be called the more conservative and antirationalistic aspects of Hayek’s ideas when he reviewed that work.

The Constitution of Liberty was written in the United States, where Hayek had moved for personal reasons. He was employed at the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago. While there, he explored his ideas in wide-ranging seminars, which also involved a number of distinguished Chicago faculty and which led to a stream of interesting work in methodology, social theory, and the history of ideas. His *Constitution of Liberty* aimed to restate, in an explicit form, the classical liberal ideas to which he was attached. It is illustrated by copious references to the history of this tradition and offered that positive statement of his own views on policy issues that some critics of his *Road to Serfdom* had diagnosed as missing from that work. *The Constitution* did not receive the attention that Hayek had hoped for from political theorists, and Antony Quinton probably expressed a then widespread view when he referred to Hayek as a dinosaur (albeit a magnificent one). Some of his policy proposals seemed to be more restrictive than his general theoretical approach would warrant, and there were problems about how his view of liberty was to be interpreted. A key difficulty was that a central idea in his work seemed to be a formalist view of the universality of law, in the tradition of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Immanuel Kant. But as Hayek himself admitted, it was not clear that this

could really secure individual freedom, and his response to this problem did not seem clear-cut.

In response to rules for retirement at a fixed age in Chicago, Hayek returned to Europe—to Freiburg, to Salzburg, and then to Freiburg. During this period, he produced a trilogy, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty*, and his *Fatal Conceit* (notably after his receipt of a joint Nobel Prize in economics in 1974, as a plethora of policy proposals, including for the “Denationalization of Money”). The former of these started out as a planned pamphlet. In this pamphlet, under the impact of Bruno Leoni’s raising problems about the model of the rule of law as a product of legislation with which Hayek had been implicitly working until this point (relating to the difficulties posed by modern, active legislatures for the stability of the law), Hayek attempted to recast his legal ideas as a reinterpretation of the common law tradition. The volumes contain a lot that is interesting, including some ideas for a new upper house of a legislative body. They would seem, however, to be more suggestive than something that works as a complete whole. *The Fatal Conceit* stemmed from a wish by Hayek to document his case against socialism—interpreted in the most general of ways. While it, again, contains some interesting ideas, Hayek was working on it during a period in which his powers were failing. W. W. Bartley III, whom Hayek had asked to be his biographer and the editor of his *Collected Works*, subsequently edited the volume heavily. With Hayek’s agreement, he included the extensive cutting of repetition (at Hayek’s request) and a reordering of material. Although the overall result, on Hayek’s own account, does not misrepresent Hayek’s ideas, it does not read like Hayek’s work. In addition, the volume as edited offers a resolution between the critical rationalist and antirationalist aspects of Hayek’s thought that may be more Popperian than Hayek would have been completely happy with.

Conclusion

Hayek’s writings are interesting and powerful and give the lie to the idea that it required John Rawls to reinvent political philosophy in the late twentieth century. Some aspects of his work seem of lasting importance—in particular, what might be called his concern for the structural constraints imposed on what we can accomplish politically by the functional

requirements of a market economy and legal arrangements needed to secure individual liberty. Some other issues were not successful; in particular, as he became older, his devotion to a hard line in classical liberalism became stronger, but it was not clear that he offered arguments against the possibility of what one might call a market-wise but generous welfare state. Also, the evolutionary themes in his work, while attempting to address an important problem, do not seem a success. There is much else that is important but requires further work—such as the potential opened up by his criticisms of the ideal of social justice because of the characteristics of a working market economy and his stress on the role of unplanned institutions and the problems of their piecemeal improvement. In a strange sense, while some of his ideas have made an important impact on socialists such as Lord Plant, David Miller, and Andrew Gamble and while some of his arguments were reinvented by Alec Nove, the politicization of its reception—by enthusiasts and critics alike—has perhaps led to not as much being drawn from it as Hayek deserves.

Jeremy Shearmur

See also [Capitalism](#); [Communism](#), [Varieties of](#); [Conservatism](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Fabianism](#); [Fascism](#); [Ideology](#); [Liberalism](#); [Liberty](#), [Theories of](#); [Modernization](#); [Neoconservatism](#); [Neoliberalism](#); [Planning](#); [Social Democracy](#); [Stalin and Stalinism](#); [State](#), [Theories of the](#); [Totalitarianism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831) was a German philosopher whose concerns ranged over the full scope of human experience. The culmination of idealist philosophy beginning with Immanuel Kant and including Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, his thought is one important origin of Marxist political thought. As one who was young during the French Revolution and lived during the dynamic development of capitalism, he sought to comprehend what those momentous events meant for Western political thought and practice. Throughout his philosophy, he argued for the centrality of freedom—though his critics frequently wondered whether his idea of freedom had any coherence to it. His major work of political philosophy is *The Philosophy of Right* (1821). His first important philosophical work, *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), also contains many important political insights, as do his lectures on world history, published posthumously, and especially the introductory lectures, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History: Introduction* (1975). He also published *The Science of Logic* (1816) and *The Encyclopedia* (1817; revised editions 1827 and 1830), a compendium or overview of his system; his heirs published his lecture series, compiled from students' notes, on world history, aesthetics, religion, and philosophy. His minor writings and other lecture series, including some on politics, have also been published, many only recently.

Biography

Hegel was born in 1770 in Stuttgart to rising middle-class parents who attended to his education. In 1788, he was sent to a Protestant seminary attached to the university in Tübingen, a few miles from Stuttgart, where he began friendships with Friedrich Hölderlin (the poet) and Schelling (soon to be professor of philosophy). Together they shared an enthusiasm for the French Revolution and heady discussions about politics and religion. After graduation in 1793, Hegel had short stints at many vocations. He was a tutor first in Bern and then in Frankfurt. In 1801, Schelling helped him obtain a post as an unsalaried tutor earning fees from students at the University of Jena, where he composed a series of draft systems of philosophy. In 1806, he saw Napoleon the day before his decisive victory over the Prussians at Jena, fathered an illegitimate child, and finished *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. The university in shambles, Hegel moved to Bamberg as a newspaper editor and to Nuremberg as a Gymnasium (a type of high school within the German educational system) headmaster.

After this checkered career in exciting times, Hegel, now married, moved to Heidelberg as professor of philosophy in 1816, and then in 1818, took up the prestigious chair of philosophy (formerly Johann Gottlieb Fichte's) at the University of Berlin. There he published *The Philosophy of Right* and new, expanded editions of the *Encyclopedia*, gave lecture courses, published some periodical essays analyzing the proposed English Reform Bill, and engaged to some extent in the politics of Prussia, sometimes supporting radical students (with little success), sometimes settling old academic scores (with mixed success). In the fall semester of 1831, during a cholera epidemic, Hegel died, probably of intestinal disease.

Hegel's Political Philosophy

Overview

Hegel saw his philosophy as a philosophy of freedom and the history of the world as the development of the consciousness of freedom, which Hegel called *Geist*, or spirit. In his political philosophy, he explores the mutual constitution of individuality and institutions. Neither free individuals nor rational institutions are causally prior; they both depend on each other for

their development and vitality. So Hegel focuses on political institutions and practices as the result of human free will, where the will is both thoughtful and active, generating and continually revitalizing institutions and practices that themselves educate and encourage the will to more complex and sophisticated determinations or institutions and practices of freedom. In other words, for Hegel, freedom is the development, enactment, and expression of a variety of human capabilities that constitute our individuality within a constitutional modern state whose institutions encourage and require the development of those capabilities and that individuality. The mutual and mutually reinforcing constitution of individuality and institutions is dynamic, vibrant, and harmonious. Modern individuality can exist only within the complex, variegated modern political order, within which the family encourages individuation, civil society includes areas for the pursuit of private interests and shared goods, and the political state unites everyone in general or universal goals. Conversely, these modern institutions—the loving (or sentimental) family, a semiautonomous civil society including free economic activity and the rule of law, and a neutral, active state—can only exist when individuals have a sense of themselves as subjects able to act in the world, engage themselves in multiple spheres of life, and are differentiated from other individuals in a society respectful of and recognizing differing personal interests, goals, and accomplishments.

Simply to assert these statements is to raise a multitude of questions, whose answers are complex and frequently contested. Some questions, such as the meanings of *rational* and *universal* when referring to institutions, will be explored below. To some other immediate questions, answers can be proffered. Hegel's view of individual freedom is very different from those who concentrate on freedom defined (synonymously) as choice, as the absence of coercion, or as what is frequently called negative liberty. Hegel does think that free individuals must have choice in many areas of life, especially in the economic order in civil society, but he thinks that individuals and society will flourish only if individuals are also educated, thoughtful, and social enough to make choices that lead to their own self-development and to the strengthening of modern institutions (and so Hegel devotes much of *The Philosophy of Right* to developing thoughtful, cultivated citizens). Hegel also thinks, though, that in some areas of life—

such as being a citizen of the modern state—individuals do not have a choice; for him, freedom lies not in consent or tacit consent, but in the citizen's insight that the state, acting for the public good, is worthy of support. (That formulation, of course, assumes or requires that the modern state be well organized and that the citizen's comprehension be well-enough developed to see that organization.)

Hegel tries to avoid being either a communitarian (like Jean-Jacques Rousseau or Edmund Burke) or an individualist (like Thomas Hobbes or John Locke); he wishes to combine universal communities with complex individualities. Hegel wishes to avoid the liberal formulation, standard since Locke, that sees that the more power the state has, the less free the individual is. Rather, for Hegel the state needs to be powerful enough to act in the common good, but the state has that power (and the ability to discern the common good) only when individuals are free, educated, and active—and therefore, Hegel thinks, able to discern that they need the state to pursue the common good and structure major social and economic institutions so that they increase freedom.

Some who think Hegel does not integrate individuals and institutions well see him as authoritarian, a point of view common in English-language interpretations written under the influence of World War I and II and totalitarianism but also triggered by some of Hegel's more extreme praise of the state. Like Hobbes, he assimilates the state to God; he also insists on the rationality of the state. Also like Hobbes, Hegel has many interpreters who see beyond those statements to the emphasis on individual freedom, subjectivity, and activity.

Others see Hegel as conservative, a kind of Burke dressed in the wardrobe of rationality rather than in tradition and history. In one sense, this interpretation is compelling. Hegel's approach to political philosophy is, as in so many cases, idiosyncratic. For Hegel, the goal of political philosophy is not to imagine or construct a state as it ought to be, but to comprehend the present political order, its coherence and its value. In his famous words from the "Preface" to *The Philosophy of Right*, he writes,

Whatever happens, every individual is a child of his time; so philosophy too is its own time apprehended in thoughts. . . . To recognize reason as the rose in the cross of the present and thereby to enjoy the present, this is the rational insight which reconciles us to the actual. . . . What is rational is actual and what is actual is rational.

Here, Hegel distinguishes “the actual” from “the real.” The real is more or less everything that exists in its empirical richness and diversity; the actual consists of the institutions and practices that are central to Hegel’s vision of the modern state and of individual freedom within that state.

Recognizing that Hegel is in one sense conservative or accepting of the present, other commentators note that he differs radically from Burke, partly because for Hegel an institution needs to be justified by reason, not merely tradition, and partly because Hegel incorporates the ideals of the French Revolution and the practices of modern political economy into his political thought.

Hegel’s emphasis on comprehending the present is crucial to Karl Marx, who adopts that principle for his communism; Marx wishes to examine capitalism to find its internal contradictions and possible future (revolutionary) directions rather than simply posit a communist condition that ought to exist.

Two Hegelian terms need further clarification. For Hegel, universal can encompass various scopes of generality. The rights of man are universal because all people can claim them (although outside of Europe, not all people’s rights are actualized). A state is universal because it takes into account all its citizens. In a contract, universality appears as the common will of the contract, what the two parties agree on. Hegel is concerned to see universality in many different forms and scope because he is concerned to develop universality or communities (at the same time that he develops varieties of individuality).

Hegel is certainly not the first, or the only, political philosopher who claims that the institutions he presents are rational. But rationality in Hegel carries many meanings. At its most philosophical, reason or rationality is the self-

determination of concepts, so reason involves the autonomous self-movement and self-development of concepts from the most basic or simple (like sense perception, in *The Phenomenology*, or bare being, in *The Logic*) to the most complex, absolute knowing. In Hegel's political philosophy, reason also involves the self-movement of concepts as well as their actualization in practice (the actual, not the real)—a process also described as dialectical.

For instance, when Hegel discusses abstract right (similar to Locke's natural rights in the state of nature), he reduces the scene to the bare minimum required (a person's will and a thing) and then develops and fills out what abstract right entails and includes. As he enriches his presentation, he eventually reaches a point where right is in conflict with itself or poses a problem that it cannot solve on its own terms; in order for the problem to be resolved, a standpoint different from abstract right must be introduced—and for Hegel's dialectic, that new standpoint must grow out of the terms of abstract right's problem itself.

When that dialectic plays out in the institutions and practices of the modern state, it produces a rational state—a state whose institutions and practices are connected by dialectical logic. What is striking about Hegel's rational state is the variety of types of institutions and practices it contains.

Hobbes's logic—or John Rawls's or Robert Nozick's—is monochromatic: it moves in a straight line from presuppositions to conclusions. Hegel's dialectic logic allows, indeed requires, movements to new and different standpoints, institutions, or practices. So Hegel's rationality is variegated, a coat of many colors—and so Hegel's state contains institutions based on different principles and encouraging different dimensions of individual development.

Rights and Morality

The Philosophy of Right is divided into three parts: “Abstract Right,” “Morality,” and “Ethical Life,” which comprises more than half the text and is itself divided into “Family,” “Civil Society,” and “State.” In the “State,”

Hegel treats not only “Constitutional Law,” but also “International Law” and “World History.”

Hegel begins the substance of *The Philosophy of Right* with a discussion of “Abstract Right,” mentioned above. For Hegel, the people put their will into a thing and make it their property: this is the form of the right to property. From that, Hegel derives the right to life and liberty, as people put their will into their mind and body, making them theirs (and so gain control over the contents of their mind and actions of their body). Hegel develops abstract right further by multiplying property-owning persons, who can then contract with each other in free contracts. But exchanges can also involve wrong, if force or fraud is used. Hegel then discusses punishment, the righting of wrong by punishing the person.

What Hegel has done, in other words, is to generate the person’s rights to life, liberty, property, and free exchange—the traditional rights of human beings. He has also discussed and justified punishment. But with Hegel, as with Locke, punishment cannot be ensured in a world of personal rights. So Locke jumps to the state. But Hegel explores punishment more and sees that wrong and punishment are not concerned only with my or your rights, but with the universal right in general, and persons ought to do what is universally right. That formulation, however, moves (dialectically) beyond the standpoint of rights to the standpoint of (Kantian) morality, where each person ought to will the universal.

So in the second part, “Morality,” Hegel discusses and modifies Kantian morality. Throughout, the problem for the moral subject, as a particular being, is how to discover, define, and act on a universal moral principle. Hegel stresses both the (Kantian) universal principle and the particularity of the subject. As a particular being, the subject has, Hegel thinks, the right to be satisfied—to live in and experience interactions and institutions that fulfill his or her particular subjectivity and goals. In the quest for the universal, however, the subject finds no definite content; here, as in *The Phenomenology*, Hegel criticizes Kantian morality on the grounds that Kantian universalizability generates consistency but nothing more. “Morality” as a standpoint fails because it cannot ensure the universal, but, for Hegel, the existence of human beings with abstract and moral rights

requires and demonstrates the existence of institutions and practices that generate such human beings. Those institutions and practices Hegel calls *Sittlichkeit*, or ethical life.

Sittlichkeit, or Ethical Life

Hegel's discussion of *Sittlichkeit*, or ethical life—the central political institutions of the modern world, family, civil society, and state—is striking in many ways, as Hegel reconceptualizes those institutions and indeed reconceptualizes political life as *Sittlichkeit*. Ethical life is the overcoming of the one-sidedness of abstract rights and of the noumenal categorical imperatives. Ethical life includes institutions in which people can actualize and live their rights and be moral because the institutions provide the determinacy (or actualization) absent in rights and morality.

Hegel includes civil society as a realm of ethical life separate and different from both state and family. Aristotle saw the polis and the household as the two central political organizations, and Hobbes and Locke talked about political or civil society. But Hegel separates civil society—the system of needs, the administration of justice, and the police or public authorities and corporations—from both household and state. This separation legitimates a space—civil society—where individuals can engage in the selfish pursuit of their own goals and at the same time, quarantines such selfish pursuits away from family and state.

By separating civil society, Hegel becomes one of the first political philosophers to confront and accommodate the insights of modern political economy, the ideas of Adam Smith and David Ricardo. Hegel also recognizes that the modern economic order cannot be autonomous but requires guidance from the public authorities, who can provide public goods (like transportation infrastructure), mitigate systemic shocks that cause price spikes, and alleviate other market shortcomings. Hegel is acutely aware of a serious and ongoing limit of civil society: the workings of a generally free economic order generate a class of poverty-stricken individuals, a rabble of paupers, whose poverty is not their fault. Rather, formally equal contracts result in substantively unequal distributions of wealth and resources, an inequality exacerbated by technological progress

and an intensified division of labor. Hegel cannot discern a successful means for the modern state to resolve the problem of poverty other than to suggest sending the surplus populations overseas to found colonies.

Because civil society is a separate sphere of activities and institutions, Hegel can conceptualize the family as a loving or sentimental family, not exclusively a contract (as in Hobbes, Locke, and Kant) nor the locus of producing and consuming goods (as in Aristotle's household). For Hegel, marriage is an institution to supersede contractual attitudes with mutual feelings of love and affection both between spouses and for children.

Hegel can also reconceptualize the state. By placing love and family ties in the family and economic attitudes and legalistic approaches in civil society, Hegel can interpret the state as the institution that pursues the universal good of the community as a whole. A family has only a partial and narrow perspective; actors in civil society think in terms of their own private goods; only the state has a perspective broad enough to allow it to determine the overall goals of and policies for the community. The state is knowledgeable, neutral among competing groups and interests, and active in the pursuit of the public good.

Hegel's treatment of the state's constitution differs somewhat from the U.S. idea of the division of powers, with president, legislature, and court. Hegel talks of a monarch, legislature, and executive (having placed the administration of justice in civil society). The executive branch or the bureaucracy learns about and administers the society. The legislature passes laws. The monarch provides a point of ultimate decision, although scholars disagree about the monarch's power and initiative. In any event, Hegel sees the hereditary monarch as providing a moment of subjectivity and of the natural amid the civilization of the modern state. (As an important aside, to look at Hegel's political philosophy thematically allows one to see, for instance, that each of the major institutions of ethical life retains a moment or aspect of nature, no matter how civilized or rational Hegel's ethical life may be—or, to be more precise, for Hegel's politics, civilization and rationality must always include an aspect of the natural: sexual relations and feelings in the family, working on nature and natural products in the system of needs, and in the state the monarch by birth and the upper house of the

legislature, composed of land-owners whose livelihood depends on the land they work.)

When Hegel talks of international relations, some interpreters think he adopts a stance between Hobbes's ideal of sovereign, autonomous states that can arbitrarily make and break treaties and Kant's insistence on a cosmopolitanism that ought to be and that is a universal ethical obligation. Hegel rejects Kant's cosmopolitanisms as he rejects Kantian morality: an ought-to-be that lacks content, determinacy, and hence existence in the world. But Hegel also rejects Hobbesian autonomous sovereignty, because he sees that a modern state depends on other states for relations, recognition, and legitimation. Consequently, states develop norms of cooperation and share the universalist standards of rights and the universal practices of trade and commerce in civil society. So Hegel sees that international relations includes states' developing toward shared norms and reciprocal recognition. (By looking to what is actual, to what is happening in the present, Hegel is able to reject Hobbesian autonomous sovereignty, recognize cosmopolitanism only as an ought, but still see how states develop reciprocal linkages and shared norms—whether Hegel is conservative or not, his attention to the actual liberates him, he thinks, from the one-sidedness of normative arguments.)

Hegel also considers world history. Here Hegel propounds a metanarrative, encompassing all of human history as the story of the progress of the consciousness of freedom. (Recently, noting the anomalous place of Egypt and the general ignoring of Africa, some critical commentators have raised questions of Hegel's inclusiveness and possible racism.) The progressive embodiment of freedom now rests with European states, for whom "all are free," unlike for instance Rome, where only citizens were free and only as legal subjects. Some see Hegel as ending history with Europe; others see that he ends history only on methodological grounds (philosophy cannot treat the future or what ought to be), and that he certainly imagines future developments of human freedom.

Politics in The Phenomenology of Spirit

Throughout his works, Hegel keeps politics in mind. But some famous passages and themes in the *Phenomenology* seem particularly important to Hegel's political philosophy. In the section on "the moral view of the world," Hegel criticizes Kantian morality in ways similar to the treatment in *The Philosophy of Right*, as described above. In the famous "master-slave" or "lordship and bondage" section Hegel introduces a number of politically important considerations. Central to the masterslave dialectic is recognition. Two self-consciousnesses face each other and struggle to overcome the other. Finally, in defeat one accedes to being a slave, and the other becomes a master. But when each seeks recognition in the other, their inequality means that their recognition and their relations are unstable and partial. Only in the modern state, Hegel thinks, is equal recognition actualized and each citizen free and equal because each recognizes other citizens as free and is recognized by them as free. The true equality of citizens in the state is the equal recognition of each other's humanity and freedom, "the I that is a We, and the We that is an I," as Hegel introduces his discussion. This concern with recognition is one of the ongoing themes of contemporary Hegelian political thinkers, such as Axel Honneth.

Hegel also discusses work in the master-slave section. Work is not just a means to satisfy needs. In work, nature is grasped and transformed to conform to human wishes. The working human being is also liberated from his own natural being and desires. At the simplest level, to labor is to restrain and check desires and thus to liberate human beings from the domination of desire. Because the worker creates tools and methods to shape nature, work produces artifacts, and so new possibilities for both needs and work. Tools and work methods are social, so social work and needs develop. The human liberation from natural desires and needs is for Hegel but a first step in the human struggle to transform the natural and the singular into a second nature that is intellectual and social. Hegel articulates the developmental or civilizing process of work and needs.

Another politically crucial section is "absolute freedom and terror," which refers to the Reign of Terror during the French Revolution. For Hegel, the revolutionaries turned to terror because of their abstract thinking, their commitment to the universal goals of liberty and equality. But their commitment to universality meant that they could not undertake any

constructive activity, because to construct is to create differentiation, difference, and inequality. So all they could do was to destroy—to wipe out differentiation wherever they found it. Hegel concludes that universal goals are, and must be seen as, actualizable only through differentiated, determinate institutions and activities.

Influence

Hegel's political philosophy influenced Ludwig Feuerbach, Marx, and Engels as they struggled against its imposing systemic structure. For most of the rest of the nineteenth century, Hegel was—as Marx said in a preface to *Capital*—a dead dog, except among some British idealists such as T. H. Green. In the 1920s and 1930s, György Lukács and the Frankfurt school (including Herbert Marcuse and Max Horkheimer) used Hegelian insights to help generate a critical theory for an age where dialectical materialism as enforced by the Soviet Union had produced a sclerotic Marxism; with Hegel's ideas they could think of ideology and history, for instance, in much richer ways than the official Soviet line allowed. A revival of Hegel scholarship in the United States and in the United Kingdom occurred around 1970 and has continued through the present, and postmodern thinkers such as Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and Slavoj Žižek find themselves confronting and transforming Hegel at many turns.

Peter G. Stillman

See also [Citizenship](#); [Civil Society](#); [Community](#); [Conservatism](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Freedom of Expression](#); [French Revolution](#); [Political Thought of the](#); [German Enlightenment](#); [German Political Thought](#); [Hegelianism](#); [Idealism](#); [Kant, Immanuel](#); [Liberalism](#); [Liberty](#); [Theories of](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [State](#); [Theories of the](#)

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Hegelianism

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Hegelianism

Hegelianism is a philosophical movement launched by students of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831), who taught at the University of Berlin from 1818 until his death. Hegel's philosophy was enormously influential in the German territories until the defeat of the Revolutions of 1848, when it underwent an eclipse until the latter years of the nineteenth century. Revived by the British idealists, it was also adapted by other theoretical traditions, including Marxism, existentialism, and twentieth-century communitarianism, which focus on its political and ethical dimensions. Its theoretical dimensions, especially the relation to Immanuel Kant and to analytical philosophy, have also been subject to recent reexamination so that it is proper to speak of a revival of Hegelianism in contemporary thought.

Hegel builds on the philosophy of Kant and Johann Gottlieb Fichte to develop a new, historical conception of reason. The core of Hegel's idealism is the unity of thought and being. This philosophy does not imply that reality consists only of ideas. It means, rather, that reason or thought has a causal force, that it is capable of changing the objective world, or of realizing itself. Freedom for Hegel means recognizing oneself in an other. This recognition can occur in mutual interaction with other subjects, confirming our freedom, or it can mean that we recognize ourselves as reflected in the objective world as we refashion it in light of our ideas. Hegel explains in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* that the social world is made up of changing configurations of relationships, each of which expresses a

particular understanding of reason and freedom. Each of these relationships is also burdened with specific contradictions or limitations, which require a revision both of the standards of rationality and of the ways in which reason is manifest. What is the status of the modern world in this schema?

Hegelianism represents the development and critique of Hegel's project of examining the realization of reason in the modern world.

In his *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel was describing this unity of thought and being at the heart of his philosophy when he asserted that the real is rational, and the rational is real. This claim is not a simple apology for the existing order, as it is sometimes interpreted, but expresses a confidence in the power of reason to achieve greater mastery over objective conditions that hamper autonomy. Modern freedom is manifested in the figure of the free and infinite personality, which combines increasing economic differentiation and needs, with the reflexive unity provided by citizenship in a rationally ordered state. For Hegel, modernity is, however, a problematic configuration of social life: it gives an unprecedented scope to subjective freedom, compatible with coexistence in rationally justified public institutions, but it is also a culture of diremption or alienation, in which private interest threatens to overwhelm the integrative capacities of these institutions. More specifically at issue was the assessment of the Prussian state, which after a period of political and economic reform under the pressures of the French Revolution and Napoleon, had proven resistant to further modernization. After Hegel's death, his school fractured over the evaluation of modern political, social, and religious institutions, especially in the German states, and the degree to which they adequately incarnated freedom.

The Hegelian school was always a very loose association of philosophers, theologians, and political thinkers comprised of shifting political and geographic alliances. United initially by a project of publishing Hegel's Berlin courses in aesthetics, religion, history, and so on, members of the school edited eighteen volumes of lectures, of varying reliability, between 1832 and 1845. Disagreements among Hegel's students over the interpretation of his philosophy were summarized in 1837 by David Friedrich Strauss (1808–74) as a distinction among Hegelians of the Right, who stressed the compatibility of Hegel's philosophy with orthodox

Christianity; the Left, who reformulated Christian doctrines; and the Center, indecisively straddling both camps. These labels quickly assumed wider political meanings. Right Hegelians advocated accommodation with existing political authorities (though most continued to seek reforms). The Left or Young Hegelians adopted more radical conclusions, reflecting on the effects of the French Revolution and the end of the old social order of estates. The Hegelians were quickly embroiled in political contestation in the *Vormärz*, the period from the late 1830s until the German Revolutions of March 1848.

Reviving charges that had been made against German philosophers in the eighteenth century, conservatives in the 1830s accused Hegel of pantheism, or of equating the divine with nature, implicitly denying a personal God. The conservatives stressed instead the separateness of God from the world, with Christ as the unique mediator between the human and the divine. They conceived the monarch to play a similar mediating role in the political realm, as uniquely endowed with sovereignty. In response, the Right Hegelians defended Hegel's religious orthodoxy, while the Hegelian Left initiated a critique of religion and its political applications.

In the late 1830s, these conservative attacks on Hegelianism sharpened under the sponsorship of the Crown Prince of Prussia, who succeeded to the throne as Friedrich Wilhelm IV in 1840. Viewing Hegelianism as subversive of political order and established religion, he purged Hegelian and other reforming influences from the state and the universities and promoted antirationalist pietist theologians and Romantic philosophers, such as Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, who was recalled to Berlin expressly to combat Hegelianism. In these circumstances, the Hegelian Left undertook the further development of the Hegelian system and the defense of the Enlightenment with its heritage of rational critique and emancipation from hierarchical social relationships. Hegel had synthesized Enlightenment sources in his own system; his students sought to think these sources through again, often challenging Hegel's own expressed conclusions.

The Hegelian Right tended to stress Hegel's orthodox religious views and his accommodation to existing political realities. Rejecting the criticisms of Hegel as a pantheist, Philipp Marheineke (1780–1846), first editor of

Hegel's Berlin lectures on religion, and Carl Friedrich Göschel (1784–1861) argued that Hegel's philosophy was compatible with Christian theological ideas on the personal immortality of the soul, the divinity of Christ, and the personhood of God. The Right Hegelians also stressed Hegel's affirmative relation to existing political authorities, while generally favoring gradual reforms. In his 1853 *Philosophy of the Ugly*, Carl Rosenkranz (1805–79), often associated with the Hegelian Right, developed Hegel's aesthetic ideas. He explained the role of the ugly in modern art, in contrast to classical conceptions of beauty, as related to the fundamental experiences of disharmony in social life, and he depicted comedy as a liberation from ugliness and from the commonplace in the modern world.

In defense of a more radical approach to politics, religion, society, and art, the Hegelian Left redefined important elements of Hegel's philosophical system. One such concept is the idea of spirit. For Hegel, *objective* spirit refers to the historically developing forms of freedom, crystallized in social and political institutions, and in different conceptions of personhood. *Absolute* spirit condenses these understandings in artistic depictions, religious representations, and philosophical systems. The Left Hegelians contested interpretations of spirit proposed by the Hegelian Right as involving the activities of a divine being or transcendent force, operating through human agency. The Left defined spirit as the immanent historical processes of individual and social emancipation and self-formation, propelled by contradiction and struggle. Absolute spirit too was reconfigured from its canonical ordering by Hegel, for whom philosophy was closer to religion than to art, differing in form but not content. For the Left Hegelians by 1840, religion was viewed as a form of alienated spirit, or as a spirit unaware of its own activity, whereas art was taken to demonstrate the effectiveness of reason in reshaping the material world. Sharing this active and creative relation to the objective order, art was thus elevated above religion in the hierarchy of the absolute. Religious alienation was conceived by Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–72) as the projection of human species characteristics into a fetishistic divine being and by Bruno Bauer (1809–82) and the young Karl Marx (1818–83) as an imaginary compensation for deficiencies of earthly life. While Enlightenment theorists had criticized religion as an instrument of power, the Left Hegelians tended

to see it as a necessary though transient historical stage through which consciousness must pass on its road to emancipation and self-clarity.

In rethinking the forms of objective spirit and completing the Enlightenment project, new ideas of freedom and community emerged. As Bauer presents the issue, the Hegelian heritage splits along two axes, the Fichtean and the Spinozist (after Dutch-Jewish philosopher Baruch Spinoza, 1632–77), which Hegel himself had attempted to synthesize. These two axes stress respectively individuality and collectivity. Bauer's own Fichtean reading emphasized principles of autonomy, or the conscious, individual enactment of universal interests. The alternate, Spinozist route from Hegel, followed by D. F. Strauss and Feuerbach, leads to the affirmation of universality as community or shared interests, while placing less emphasis on the element of individual willing. In Feuerbach and Marx, it leads to the idea of a collective species-being, damaged by particularistic and egoistic activities, but potentially retrievable through changes in social relationships. Both the Fichtean and the Spinozist reading of Hegel stress the importance of universality, a general will that transcends immediate interests and desires. Alienation and isolating egoism in modern social life were addressed, in opposing directions, by Feuerbach, who stressed solidarity, and Max Stirner (1806–56), who stressed disengagement.

The attack upon privilege and hierarchy, the democratization of the state and the achievement of a republic of self-consciousness based upon the recognition of universal interests, animated the works of the leading Hegelian theorists such as Bauer, and Arnold Ruge (1802–80). These authors criticized Hegel's position in his *Philosophy of Right* as an unacceptable compromise between the diametrically opposed principles of monarchic and popular sovereignty. Bauer also criticized the hierarchical order of estates that had characterized pre-revolutionary Europe, and with important reservations, he endorsed the Jacobin position in the French Revolution.

The fulfillment of the Enlightenment program of emancipation also meant confronting unprecedented social and economic problems. For the Hegelian Left, the incomplete rationality of modern society assumed an especially acute form with the emergence of the social question, the rise of capitalism,

and the appearance of new forms of urban industrial poverty. Eduard Gans (1797–1839) described the concentration of economic power as the decisive problem impeding further progress in freedom. Revising Hegel's account of poverty in the *Philosophy of Right*, Gans drew on French social thought such as Saint-Simon's ideas of association (a precursor to modern trade unionism) to argue that the combined power of wageworkers could offset the monopolistic bargaining position of capital owners and lead to a more equitable distribution of wealth, yet he repudiated socialist ideas of collective property as inimical to freedom and individuality. Gans made ideas of opposition, struggle, and social exclusion central to Left Hegelian understandings of progress toward a more rational society. Despite deep-seated political differences, Bauer, Ruge, and the young Marx shared this perspective.

In his 1843 critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, Marx contrasts the rigid formalism of political life to the concrete dynamics of civil society and shows how atomism in social relations corresponds to the abstract and fetishistic character of the state. Marx thus breaks with Left Hegelian republicanism and moves toward a socialist position that requires the abolition of private property in the means of production as the solution to the problem of alienation and exploitation in the modern world. For Marx (at least by 1843), a mere reform of political institutions would leave the underlying economic causes of alienation untouched. Together with Feuerbach, Marx holds that the development of certain capabilities is of intrinsic and not merely instrumental value. For Marx, these include not only basic physical needs, but also intellectual and cultural development, the possibility of fulfilling forms of labor, and membership in community. Marx's early texts combine the idea of a substantive good reminiscent of Aristotle with Kantian ideas of freedom and self-determination. The emancipation of labor would mean the attainment of autonomy, whose institutional form would, on this reading, be a version of socialism.

Hegelian thought tended to fall into disrepute with the failure of the European revolutions of 1848 and with the rise of positivism in the later nineteenth century. Versions of it remained important, however, in the development of Marxism, which considered itself an inverted or upright Hegelianism divested of idealist metaphysics, but retaining a dialectical and

historical method, and a distinction between essence and appearance (between labor and its manifestations in politics, culture, religion, etc.). Hegel was also the most important reference for British idealism, as represented by T. H. Green (1836–82), Edward Caird (1835–1908), and F. H. Bradley (1846–1924), who contested the atomistic conception of the self typical of modern liberalism, a self divorced from its vivifying social context. They developed ideas of social connectedness and an ethic of conscientiousness and responsibility. Drawing themes from Hegel, contemporary political thinkers such as Charles Taylor object to the disembodied nature of the liberal subject or the reduction of social relations to merely instrumental value. This position is frequently associated with communitarianism, as opposed to contemporary liberalism, which with John Rawls is more closely linked with Kant.

At the turn of the twentieth century, analytical philosophy emerged in the works of Bertrand Russell (1872–1970) and G. E. Moore (1873–1958) as a protest against British Hegelianism, though contemporary work in analytical philosophy (Robert Brandom, John McDowell) is reviving interest in Hegel's contributions in logic and epistemology, rethinking the intuition-concept relationship that is fundamental to modern Hegel research. Important new theoretical developments see Hegel as much closer to Kant, completing and correcting the latter's critical program rather than abandoning it. The emerging political implications of this research are to challenge the identification of Hegelianism and communitarianism.

Hegelian influence has been pervasive in twentieth-century continental philosophy. Existentialism, especially that of Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–80), takes up themes from Fichte and Hegel to devise a theory of freedom and individuality in the modern world devoid of essential or given truths. The hermeneutics of Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911) and H.-G. Gadamer combine Hegelian influences with those of naturalism and psychologism, and of Heidegger, respectively. French postmodernism (Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze) is a kind of anti-Hegelianism that criticizes what it sees as the holism of Hegel's dialectic and its alleged reduction of difference to sameness or uniformity; this claim is often associated with skepticism toward ideas of universality that Hegel defends. Originating in the works of Theodor W. Adorno (1903–69) and Max

Horkheimer (1895–1973), contemporary critical theory (Jürgen Habermas, Axel Honneth) retains the idea of universal interests and develops Hegelian themes of intersubjectivity and mutual recognition as ethical features of the modern world. These thinkers undertake the critique of modern alienation and of instrumental reason in the name of a fuller conception of rationality and freedom and a new ethic of intersubjective recognition.

In its many manifestations, Hegelianism remains a defining feature of the contemporary intellectual and political landscape. Critically engaging with Hegel's thought, and debating with religious and political adversaries in the 1830s and 1840s, members of his school sharply posed questions of freedom, personality, and modernity, whose urgency remains undiminished. Contemporary variants of Hegelianism continue to pursue this agenda in metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and political thought.

Douglas Moggach

See also [Alienation](#); [Bauer, Bruno](#); [Dialectic\(s\)](#); [Engels, Friedrich](#); [Feuerbach, Ludwig](#); [Frankfurt School](#); [German Enlightenment](#); [German Political Thought](#); [Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich](#); [Idealism](#); [Ideology](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Marcuse, Herbert](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Nietzsche, Friedrich](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Progress](#); [Radicalism](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Stirner, Max](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Heidegger, Martin

Born in Messkirch, Baden-Württemberg, in 1889, Martin Heidegger studied Catholic theology and later philosophy at Freiburg University under the guidance of Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenology. After teaching at Freiburg and Marburg, he became professor of philosophy at Freiburg in 1928. He died in Messkirch in 1976.

His greatest work, *Being and Time* (1927, translated 1962), asked the question “What is being?” and answered it by analyzing the being of human beings or *Dasein* (literally, being-there), the only entities that interpret themselves and decide on their own being. *Dasein*’s being is existence (in its root sense of stepping forth) or being-in-the-world. People are thrown along with others into a world comprising interrelated objects of use against the background of nature. Our being is temporal. Not confined to the present, we look back to the past and ahead to the future. Temporality opens up the world: we are not focused exclusively on the object of our present attention, but are aware of entities encountered in the past and available in the future. Our normal condition is “inauthenticity”: People do what others do rather than making up their own minds. But looking ahead to their death in “anxiety” and “resoluteness” extricates them from the others into “authenticity.” Temporality enables us to have a significant history. Authentic historical action is not simply an individual matter: *Dasein* acts “in and with its ‘generation.’”

Later, under the influence of Friedrich Nietzsche, Oswald Spengler, and Ernst Jünger, Heidegger argued that not only Dasein but also being itself has a history. The way in which entities reveal themselves varies from epoch to epoch. The modern conception of being is an intensification of the Greek view of being as being produced. This conception underlies technology and the corresponding calculating, utilitarian worldview. Both America and the Soviet Union were, for Heidegger, bastions of technology, treating the whole world, including humans, as a standing reserve.

In 1933, Heidegger joined the Nazi party and was elected rector of Freiburg University. His rectoral address endorsed the new regime and its plans for reform of universities, but was conspicuously free of anti-Semitism. As rector, he applied Nazi policies but moderated some of the excesses of Nazism, refusing, for example, to dismiss two Jewish professors—professedly to protect Germany's international reputation, but since he could hardly have given any other reason, his motive remains in doubt. He resigned as rector in April 1934 and withdrew from political activity. He did not withdraw his support for Nazism and did not perform the dangerous act of resigning from the Party. Later, he became disillusioned, regarding Nazism as an expression of technology rather than as its remedy. He continued to view it as an aspect of modernity, on a par with capitalism, factory farming, and the hydrogen bomb, rather than as a specifically German phenomenon. In 1945, on the grounds of his association with Nazism, he was forbidden to teach; in 1951, his teaching privileges were restored. At first privately, and later publicly, he continued to develop his ideas until his death.

Like many German philosophers, Heidegger aspired to philosophical leadership, imposing his ideas on the amorphous Nazi worldview. His Nazism was inspired primarily by hatred of technology, capitalism, and Bolshevism. *Being and Time* is relatively apolitical. It is compatible with Nazism (though not with biological anti-Semitism) in that it could provide reasons for supporting Nazism. But it might equally provide reasons for opposing Nazism, and other philosophical standpoints might supply equally good, though equally inconclusive, reasons for supporting Nazism. For example, Nazism attracted philosophers who affirmed objective ethical values (such as Bruno Bauch and Nicolai Hartmann) as well those (such as

Heidegger) who denied them. Heidegger eventually concluded that philosophy has no direct relevance to politics and cannot provide reliable guidance, either on political principles and policies or through the thickets of political infighting.

Although his views on technology have influenced the environmentalist movement, Heidegger offered no practical proposals for countering it. His remedy is art rather than recycling. Art provides a model of a nontechnological approach to things. It lets objects be as they are without manipulating or exploiting them. His influence has been immense, but less on politicians than on theologians (e.g., Karl Rahner, Rudolf Bultmann) and philosophers—Hans-Georg Gadamer, Herbert Marcuse, and Theodor Adorno in Germany, Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida in France.

Michael Inwood

See also [German Political Thought](#); [National Socialism](#); [Nietzsche, Friedrich](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Spengler, Oswald](#); [Technology and Political Thought](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Herder, Johann Gottfried

German philosopher Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744–1803) is the intellectual father of nineteenth-century romanticism. He was influential in anthropology, philosophy of language, aesthetics, philosophy of history, and in political philosophy. In his political philosophy, Herder develops an organic understanding of the political community, which he grounds in a nation. According to Herder, a nation (or a *Volk*, a people) is a cultural entity with a distinct character and a shared language. Herder believes that a nation's character is embodied in its language: members of the nation think according to the national language they speak. In his philosophy of language and philosophy of history, Herder argues at length that thought is dependent on language: we think in a manner inherited from our language. As such, the members of a people are intrinsically connected, like organs within a body or branches to a tree. Herder contrasts this intrinsic, organic connection with mechanical and multinational associations that can only maintain unity in an extrinsic and artificial way by enforcing it from above. Therefore, he puts forward the principle that national-linguistic communities should be states. This principle has become known as the essence of nationalism. For Herder, the natural state is a nation-state, a state with one national character and one language, and we should avoid mingling together different nations within a mechanical multinational state.

This nationalistic argument arouses suspicion today, but although Herder's sociological lens certainly did not allow for conceptualizing dual communal loyalties, bilingualism, or multinational democracies, all in all his

nationalism is moderate. The aura of narrow nationalism that sometimes surrounds his work does not originate from Herder's own theory but from Herder's reception, especially by nineteenth-century German nationalists who have argued on the basis of a Herderian background. To justly interpret Herder's nationalism, we need to take the following four features into account.

First, Herder's nationalism is linguistic and cultural in nature and never results in a racist or ethnic nationalism. Second, Herder's nationalism is grounded in the importance of growth, variety, spontaneity, and dynamism. Participation from individuals is therefore a central feature of Herder's nationalism: individuals are both recipients and participants; they inherit a tradition and in doing so, appropriate and shape it. So individuals are not stuck in their tradition: they also shape it. Third, Herder's nationalism never assumes an imperialistic or aggressive twist. Herder does indeed approve of linguistic and national patriotism. But even here he only defends a purified form of patriotism (*geläuterter Patriotismus*), and he forcefully condemns invasions in foreign countries.

The fourth and most important qualification and feature of his political philosophy is the fact that Herder endorses a form of cosmopolitanism. To be sure, Herder shows no appreciation whatsoever for people who define themselves as cosmopolitans in the sense that, in exposing love for humankind, they denounce the importance of national affiliations. Yet Herder does support cosmopolitanism in the sense that he expresses equal respect for the world's cultures, and for the individual differences within each of them. Herder's theory is grounded in an account of *Humanität* (humanity), which he believes is universally shared. Herder understands humanity as a unity, and he sees history as a chain of humanity that binds together individuals and nations.

This internationalist cosmopolitanism is most clearly displayed in Herder's important battle against colonialism and imperialism. Herder continuously lashes out against the arrogance of European states forcing others—especially African and American peoples—to live according to European norms, often as slaves. Rather than having brought civilization to the colonized nations, Herder argues that the European powers have

illegitimately destroyed local cultures and imposed their own. Herder also has nothing good to say about heroes such as Alexander the Great or Julius Caesar, who have oppressed many peoples and are responsible for numerous deaths. Likewise, he sets out against the crusades that, in his opinion, only brought death, destruction, and injustice. In fact, Herder is an anticolonialist cosmopolitan precisely because he is a nationalist: Herder's view is that we should allow each people to thrive on its own, undisturbed by others. Every people has a fundamental interest in not being overrun by aggressive others. The nation-state model essentially strives toward an international order in which every nation is enabled to determine its collective way of life, separate from other nations. Herder holds the idea, characteristic of the harmonious tendency present throughout his entire work, that the earth is big enough for every people to have its own distinct spot.

Herder additionally justifies this nationalistic policy to let every nation thrive within its own political borders by arguing that this allowance will enable humanity and the progress of reason to manifest itself. This progress will manifest itself in a natural way if peoples are provided with the means to pass down their own traditions and shape them according to their own beliefs, customs, and climates. There is not one universal yardstick of progress. Each culture has its own way of being. The culture of humanity shoots forth here and there in larger or smaller quantities and eventually blossoms in all nations. So the progress of reason has its own rules and customs. It does not step in the way of any political constitution (and Herder had also famously argued that no foreign nation should interfere in the civil war into which France entered in the aftermath of the French Revolution). With a friendly hand and as a gentle force, reason shows humankind its mistakes and outlines the right route to follow.

Helder De Schutter

See also [Cosmopolitanism](#); [German Enlightenment](#); [German Political Thought](#); [Nationalism](#); [Progress](#); [State, Theories of the](#)

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Historicism

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Historicism

Historicism played a key role in twentieth-century philosophies of history associated with Benedetto Croce, Friedrich Meinecke, and Karl Popper and reached a peak of influence within social science between the 1950s and the 1980s. It colored the thought of theologian Ernst Troeltsch and sociologist Karl Mannheim and has come into more general usage among social scientists, political theorists, and scholars of international relations over the past twenty years as a vague and often muddled description of any deployment of history as a leading mode of inquiry. Applauded by some commentators and demonized by others, historicism has attracted layers of contradictory meaning and innuendo that now render any clear or univocal definition impossible. It is better regarded as an array of connotation that includes any combination of the following elements:

1. An acknowledgment, usually positive, of a historical process that lends meaning to human existence.
2. A historical method that stresses individualization of its subject matter rather than impersonal or large-scale trends.
3. The relativization of all phenomena and their descriptions according to historical context.
4. An assumption, usually contested, that the past is held to display trends and mechanisms that predict future outcomes.
5. A doctrine, usually combative, that historical accounts should trump all others.

These elements are not merely distinctive in their claims but readily become mutually exclusive. It follows that no student of the human sciences should use the term or its adjective (*historicist* or *historicistic*) without stipulating an intended content.

Historicism must itself be historicized in order to make sense of its evolution as a constellation of ideas. First deployed in any of its modern senses in Italy by its greatest philosopher, Benedetto Croce, it appeared as a constituent his *Logic*, published in 1909 (Tessitore 1985). It occupied a place in his Hegelian understanding of Spirit and the way in which human action both embodied it, and it shared its underlying thrust toward the establishment of liberty. Croce wanted to bring together the ontological domain and what he saw as its concretization in human experience, one witnessed through historical thought that underlay historicism, a place where “life and reality are history and history alone” (Croce 1941). This metaphysical doctrine ran alongside, but did not emulate, other formulations of historicism that originated in Germany, where the impact of rival conceptions of *Historismus* have proved the most enduring. The word took the first of its German turns during a period of profound disturbance within the historical community over issues relating to method that may be subsumed under the wider rubric of a *Methodenstreit* that preoccupied scholars in the humanities from the 1890s to World War I. The so-called crisis of historicism had a more proximate root, however, in German theology, where the onset of hermeneutic inquiry had destabilized trans-temporal certainties and produced an atmosphere of relativism in which all texts—sacred as much as secular—required an acknowledgment of historical context as the key to their meaning. When Ernst Troeltsch drew attention to this new climate in his *Historismus und seine Überwindung* (1924), he caught a more general mood that the young Karl Mannheim echoed in an early essay on historicism in which he alleged that “all historical knowledge is relational knowledge” (Lee and Beck 1954; Megill 1997). Far from accommodating Croce’s term, the use of it as a synonym for relativism took it in a contrary direction.

However, victors in the *Methodenstreit*—a body of positivistic scholars normally referred to as the *Jungrankianer* after their devotion to maintaining the style of history pioneered by Leopold von Ranke—had no

interest in a present-centered historical consciousness and wished to reassert, for a rudderless postwar world, the values and techniques of traditional German method. Their champion in these years, Friedrich Meinecke, turned his mind to what he regarded as the true home of *Historismus* in a body of German historical scholarship that bridged the years of the Enlightenment and the rise of Rankian discipline. *Die Entstehung des Historismus* (1936) then came into English as *The Rise of Historism*, an excellent new word that, had it survived, would have prevented much confusion. By it Meinecke intended to signal the importance of history as a discipline aimed at individual events and personalities, one to be distinguished from science with its nomothetic ambitions but also from Hegelianism and Idealism as underpinnings for historical work. Like Ranke himself, Meinecke stood closer to Hegel than he realised and expected the historical individual to carry the imprint of the universal; but he recoiled from *Geist* as a measure of meaning, which brought him into immediate friction with Croce who wrote a critique of Meinecke's diversion from what he, Croce, took to be historicism's true function in world (Croce 1938).

By the outbreak of World War II, then, historicism already found itself impaled on three unequal prongs: as an idealist doctrine of becoming, as a prescription for relativism, and as a plea for individuation in method.

Enter Karl Popper in 1957, who at once made a bad situation infinitely worse. Part of Popper's originality resided in his talent for inventing new vocabulary for his many novel ideas. In *The Poverty of Historicism*, he excelled at appropriating old vocabulary and forcing it into a mold of his own creation. Popper's concern with history was neither philosophical, as with Croce, nor empirical, as with Meinecke. It was libertarian and emotional. His passionate dedication of the volume to the men and women "who fell victims to the fascist and communist belief in Inexorable Laws of Human Destiny" prefigured what was to follow: a polemical attack on the idea that individuals can do nothing to resist the tide of history conceived as a process of inevitable transformation, an idea that licensed, he believed, the assumptions behind totalitarianism. He needed a word for that dangerous idea and decided, disastrously, to call it "historicism" with a breezy remark that nobody would mind what the term *historicism* "really or

properly or essentially means” (Popper 1957). He then sought to show that *his* sense of historicism could be acquired from positions that were broadly sympathetic to natural science but also from stances that turned against it. These various streams of tendency found their confluence in a “historicism” that acted to undermine the individual’s autonomy and inculcate the view that history taught fatalism before the march of vast, impersonal forces—merely a short walk from his reflections on *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1952), which blamed Plato and Hegel for instigating the tendency. Moreover, because Popper’s star was in the ascendant in Anglophone awareness, his new presentation of historicism won a rapid audience and soon became an established “meaning” of the term, especially during the more threatening years of the Cold War (Tinger 1961). He was helped in popularizing his individualizing social science by a colleague, J. W. N. Watkins, who brought a new austerity to method by claiming that all explanations of social behavior must of necessity reduce to behavior expressed in terms of the actions of specific individuals in order to claim “rock-bottom” status—a style of argument that carried over into history in the prosopography of Lewis Namier, who loathed totalitarian misuse of the past quite as forcibly as did Popper.

In thinking of more recent times, it is fair to say that Croce’s original formulation, resting as it did on Hegelian presupposition, has died away and that Meinecke and Popper’s contradictory assertions have taken center stage—the former preponderantly in German scholarship and the latter in Anglophone treatments. Just how deeply ran the difficulties of dealing with historicism revealed itself in conferences dedicated to explicating and analyzing the term: one at the Warburg Institute in London in 1974 and another at Essen in 1993 (*History and Theory* 1974; Oexle and Rüsen 1996). Both events reflected the turbulence that a postmodern epistemology might bring to the discussion of a concept stemming from either idealist or modernist assumptions. Hayden White, fresh from his *Metahistory* (1973), told the London conference that any distinction between “history” and “historicism” was now “virtually worthless,” and Frank Ankersmit, in his attempt at synthesizing some of the variants of historicism, told the Essen colloquium that all of them were “a product of their (authors’) own minds” with “no existence outside the language used for representing the past” (Ankersmitt 1995). When the more traditional mind of Georg Iggers

reflected on what was left of historicism in the 1990s, even he reduced it to a general reference to the *Weltanschauung* of modern historical scholarship and the arrival of “new historicism” as a specific doctrine of historical contextualization within literary and cultural studies (Iggers 1995).

Where, then, can one find this deliquescent idea in modern historical and political studies? The aggression with which Popper mounted his attack on historicism played into the aftermath of resistance to the later volumes of Arnold Toynbee’s *A Study of History*, completed in 1961, and indeed, all styles of history that raised their head above the parapet of the specific and finite. A mood of entrenched modernism in Anglophone historical studies placed a premium on the recommendations of Meinecke and similar thinkers to locate the past in individual entities that would speak for themselves and to avoid theoretical speculation (Bentley 1995). The historian of the Tudors, G. R. Elton, did not invent it but may stand as one of its more celebrated avatars. A similar mood penetrated the comparatively new field of international relations studies (IR), not least because of the dominance from the 1950s to the 1970s of a so-called British school under the leadership of Herbert Butterfield, Martin Wight, and, later, Hedley Bull. For Butterfield, and to a lesser extent for Wight, “theory” in evaluating international affairs took the form of a kind of historicism that insisted on making historical investigation the center of a mature conception of the field, a presupposition also evident in the early writing of Henry Kissinger in the United States. Those who, like Bull and the American theorist Kenneth Waltz, wanted to rescue IR from mere contextualization or compulsory reference to the work of professional historians and thus to avoid a “fall back into history,” as Stanley Hoffman put it, discovered considerable resistance from its Meineckian historicists (Hoffman 1987:21).

A still greater impact occurred in the field of political thought following the eruption of Quentin Skinner into its territory from the late 1960s. Skinner owed more to R. G. Collingwood and John Austin than to Meinecke, but his article on “Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas” seemed a historicist depth-charge aimed at traditional political theory (Skinner 1969). He sought to return “classic” texts to the place and time of their creation and to deploy historical contextualization as a powerful tool to reveal the inner “meanings” of an early-modern discourse too readily assimilated to

the meanings of a later period. Intentionality returned, too, as part of the package: Skinner wanted to reconstruct the intentions of authors and alleged that such intentions were by their nature *zeitbedingt*. He saw little value, and much potential distortion, in reading Thomas Hobbes, for example, as though his vocabulary could be understood in the senses accorded by the twentieth century, and he went on to construct a system of thought that revised the basis of method in writing the history of political thought more generally.

An inevitable reaction followed in the same way that it had against IR historicists. The most direct reply came from a political theorist and Hobbes scholar, Howard Warrender, who rejected Skinner's implicit claim that historical location trumped all other considerations in scrutinizing texts. What was significant, from the present point of view, were the *terms* of Warrender's rejoinder. He insisted that past texts were never merely "tracts for the times": They contained trans-temporal universals and variables that behaved with the stability of algebraic expressions that could be manipulated from the present without destroying their meaning. It remained important, he contended, to retain such universals "as some antidote to historicism, all forms of which are ultimately discriminatory." Above all, historians and their methods should never be allowed to "legislate" for the procedures of political theory (Warrender 1979). It is clear that Warrender's intended meaning of historicism had slid some distance from its original variants and become a generic descriptor for the historical enterprise itself—a shift that has become frequent in later years.

These confusions have become compounded in a postmodern age that sought from the outset to disrupt all forms of essentialism and contest univocal expressions of what a text "means." Skinner's willingness to countenance contexts—themselves limited and arguably arbitrary—as providing some form of geological explanation resembling Foucault's early concern with "epistemes" ran into the Pyrrhonism that became such a feature of epistemology during the 1990s. Ask only *which* contexts are the foundational ones and a methodological difficulty at once arises in contending that one has found *the* contexts that reveal true meaning (Bevir 1999). Meanwhile the larger shapes presented by Toynbee's version of historicism—the style that Popper wanted to eradicate—have paradoxically

reappeared in history in a sense of the past's having a "shape" and a revisiting of the idea that the past can persist as a form of presence (Munz 1977).

Cleaning up the mess of "historicism" is as simple as it is impossible. Meinecke's retreat into individuation should be referred to as either *Historismus* or to the word given by its original translator into English: *historism*. Popper's polemical description of inevitable historical forces that supposedly predict the future can be labeled *historicism*, since it has become the prevalent connotation outside Germany. Historical relativism should be called precisely that. History, the intellectual operation, has never needed any other word and should not be given one as a form of resentment against its claims. But it is almost certainly too late for simplicity. We are likely to continue mixing and matching these discordant strains and confusing audiences by an unspoken licensing of ambiguity among both enemies of and enthusiasts for the warring interpretations of historicism.

Michael Bentley

See also [Croce, Benedetto](#); [Foucault, Michel](#); [German Political Thought](#); [Hegelianism](#); [Methodology of Political Thought](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Popper, Karl](#)

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Sophie Quinn-Judge Sophie Quinn-Judge

Ho Chi Minh Thought

Ho chi minh thought

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Ho Chi Minh Thought

What is known as Ho Chi Minh Thought is a diffuse body of ideas gleaned from the speeches, writings, and life of the prime minister (1945–55)/first president (1945–69) of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh, who was born as Nguyễn Sinh Cung and also used the names Nguyễn Tất Thành and Nguyễn Ái Quốc. His thinking can be loosely described as representing a preference for pragmatic solutions over ideological ones and is probably more significant as a historical phenomenon than as an ideology. It is quite different from the ideologies attributed to other powerful communist leaders because its content was not elaborated until about twenty years after Ho Chi Minh's 1969 death as his posthumous cult grew. Yet the reasons for the appearance of Ho Chi Minh Thought are similar to those that created a need for Mao Zedong Thought or the idea of *Juche*, attributed to North Korean leader Kim Il Sung. These national-communist bodies of thought gained prominence during periods of fragmentation of the internationalist communist movement, such as World War II, the Sino-Soviet split, or the breakup of the Eastern European communist bloc in 1989.

Until the end of the communist bloc and the disappearance of the Soviet Union, Ho Chi Minh mainly served as an example of revolutionary virtue to his nation. He was known to have devoted his life to gaining Vietnam's independence and was believed to have renounced family and creature comforts for the sake of his nation. But he did not claim to be the fount of universal wisdom. Two of his most quoted sayings during the Vietnam War

were: “Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom,” and “Solidarity, solidarity, great solidarity—success, success, great success.” His approach to diplomacy is often summed up by the maxim, “more friends, fewer enemies.”

In 1951, when the Vietnamese Communist Party (CP) resurfaced as the Workers’ Party, Ho Chi Minh was described in the Party newspaper as the “soul of the Vietnamese revolution,” while the party’s General Secretary Truong Chinh was called “the builder and commander of the revolution.” Chinh in those years was known as the main theorist among the Vietnamese communists. Later, he would be temporarily eclipsed by the southern leader Le Duan as a theorist, but Ho Chi Minh was never given that distinction during his lifetime. In fact, communist archives in Russia, Hungary, and East Germany have revealed that Ho was often criticized as too nationalist, too petty bourgeois, or too willing to compromise with the Party’s enemies. Yet in the 1960s, after he had withdrawn from day-to-day political life, Ho was increasingly presented as the essence of wisdom and a generalized father-figure, not to mention as the charismatic force that held his communist party together through many factional splits. His monk-like image remained so important that when rumors surfaced in the 1980s that he had married a Chinese woman in 1927, these were quickly quashed.

At the Seventh Party Congress in 1991, the Vietnamese leadership officially decided to add Ho Chi Minh Thought to its guiding ideology of Marxism-Leninism. From that time until the present, ideologists and philosophers have been combing through Ho’s writings to figure out what he thought about everything from women to military theory. His thought is said to cover all basic problems of the Vietnamese revolution, including national and class liberation, national defense, economic and cultural development, revolutionary virtue, and the nurturing of the next generation of revolutionaries. The difficulty with this method of compilation is to know which of his speeches were crafted collectively and which writings truly reflect his own ideas. In brief, however, his collected ideas and political acts demonstrate a pragmatic, flexible approach to communist dogma and a much greater attention to national unity than to the implementation of Marxist-Leninist class warfare.

To make this a more precise set of ideas would be problematic. That would require that Ho's differences with other Vietnamese leaders at such moments as the 1952 acceleration of land reform and the campaign of party rectification be made explicit. Rather than emphasize internal polemical debates, the compilers of Ho Chi Minh Thought stick to the safer path of collecting his homilies, often addressed to the general public. These have been used to show that he was a believer in permanent revolution as well as a proponent of individual rights and the "creation of a law-based state" in Vietnam (Quang 1993, 7–8). His preference for unity with the nationalist bourgeoisie during the wars of independence, in fact, limited his taste for permanent revolution of the type Mao Zedong practiced during the Cultural Revolution in China.

Sophie Quinn-Judge

See also [Communism](#), [Varieties of](#), [Empire and Political Thought](#), [Lenin and Leninism](#), [Mao Zedong](#), [Marx, Karl](#), [Modernization](#), [Nationalism](#), [Revolution](#)

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Clive E. Hill Clive E. Hill

Hobhouse, Leonard Trelawney

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Hobhouse, Leonard Trelawney

The English philosopher and sociologist Leonard Trelawney Hobhouse (1864–1929) amended the academic theory of liberalism in a manner that paralleled the New or Progressive Party liberalism that emerged in many countries in the early twentieth century. His theories are often associated with the development of collectivism and the welfare state, so his ideas have some significance for other political traditions too. His most important and influential books were *The Labour Movement* ([1893] 1974), *A Theory of Knowledge* (1896), *Democracy and Reaction* (1904), *Morals in Evolution* ([1906] 1951), *Liberalism* ([1911] 1964), *The World in Conflict* (1915), *The Metaphysical Theory of the State* (1918), and his multivolume opus, *Principles of Sociology* (1918–24).

Hobhouse was the youngest child of a Cornish clergyman and his wife and had many aristocratic connections on both sides of his family. He was educated in Exmouth, Marlborough, and Oxford University before becoming a tutor at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, a position he held from 1890 to 1897. Temporarily disenchanted with academic life, Hobhouse subsequently became a journalist for the *Manchester Guardian* (1897–1902), the secretary of the antiprotectionist pressure group, the Free Trade Union (1903–05), and the political editor of another liberal newspaper, *Tribune*, from 1905 to 1907. He was, however, later appointed professor of sociology at the London School of Economics in 1907, a position that he held until his death on a visit to France in 1929.

Hobhouse's main contribution to modern liberal argument was to qualify the strict priority given to negative liberty in much earlier liberalism. In particular, he argued that state intervention in the economy could often be justified on humanitarian grounds, on democratic grounds, on ethical grounds, and on pragmatic grounds. His humanitarian argument was that the suffering caused by poverty should not be tolerated, his democratic argument was that it was rational for the general will to sometimes overrule private interests to promote the common good, his ethical argument stressed the importance of universal equality of opportunity, and his pragmatic argument was that providing a minimum level of welfare for everyone was a way of defending the foundations of a liberal society against its many opponents. An appropriate mixture of negative liberty ("freedom from," generally the untoward interference of the state and others) and positive liberty ("freedom to," particularly to develop one's potential) was the true test of civilization.

Hobhouse's politics were underpinned by a sophisticated theory of knowledge, of purposeful social evolution, and of interdependence ("the organic view of society"), although he insisted on a greater role for morality as a factor in human life than the nineteenth-century sociological pioneers Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer. Scientific objectivity was very important to Hobhouse, but he also valued the subjective dimension of human knowledge and sought to synthesize theories of rights, duties, and utility as the basis of moral action. He placed particular stress on public education as a way of ensuring fair opportunity for all and on votes for women, including those who were propertyless, as a matter of justice. He also often criticized laissez-faire policies. At the same time, Hobhouse was aware of the danger of overactive government, but believed it was both necessary and desirable to humanize and democratize the state; he was also a severe critic of the fashionable Edwardian doctrine of eugenics. A strong opponent of the Boer War, in the early stages of World War I he supported a policy of neutrality, but he eventually became a vociferous critic of German militarism and a supporter of the British war effort. In the 1920s, he generally prioritized philosophy over practical politics, although he supported international organizations such as the League of Nations, and made a small contribution to the Keynesian Liberal "Yellow Book" report of 1928.

Hobhouse's writings frequently used ideas derived from the work of Thomas Hill Green—an English liberal (and Idealist) philosopher of an earlier generation—and traditionally, this connection has been presented as a major factor in the younger man's theories. For example, in one of his later works, *The Metaphysical Theory of the State*, Hobhouse praised Green for his interest in practical social reform. Nevertheless, recent scholarship has tended to emphasize the influence of John Stuart Mill and Giuseppe Mazzini, as well as Comte and Spencer, on Hobhouse's thought, plus the impact of the Cornish scholar's studies of the British labor movement and his interest in natural science.

Clive E. Hill

See also [Comte, Auguste](#); [Darwinism and Social Darwinism](#); [Feminism](#); [Green, Thomas Hill](#); [Idealism](#); [Liberalism](#); [Mazzini, Giuseppe](#); [Mill, John Stuart](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Spencer, Herbert](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [Welfare State, Theories of the](#)

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Colin Tyler Colin Tyler

Hobson, John Atkinson

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Hobson, John Atkinson

John Atkinson Hobson (1858–1940) is one of the leading New Liberal political theorists and political economists. He was born on July 6, 1858, son of a newspaper proprietor in Derby, England. He was educated at Lincoln College, Oxford, before becoming a schoolteacher. Hobson moved to London in 1887, where he became involved with Marxists and other radicals. His first book, *The Physiology of Industry* ([1889] 1992), ended his chances of an academic career. Coauthored with Albert F. Mummery, the book denied some of the central tenets of the marginal economics that formed the orthodox position in British universities. Hobson's journalistic reputation grew as a result of his reports on the Boer War following an extended visit to South Africa in the 1890s. At the same time, his prolific output of books and articles started to earn him a significant reputation in radical circles. Together with the writings of Leonard T. Hobhouse, Hobson's vast output of books, articles, and journalism exerted a profound influence over the direction of political thought and practice in the early parts of the twentieth century, not least through his links to John Maynard Keynes. Even though Hobson was not a Marxist, Vladimir Illyich Lenin acknowledged Hobson's book *Imperialism* (1902) as having a very significant impact on his own *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1917). Hobson continued to write and lecture almost until his death on April 1, 1940. He was a key figure in the important London society the Rainbow Circle, with some of his last lectures to the South Place Ethical Society published as late as 2011.

Human Valuation, Social Organicism, and Imperialism

Even though Hobson's thought drew on the British idealism of Thomas Hill Green, it found its most radical underpinnings in profound debts to the humanistic political economics of John Ruskin, on whom he published a book in 1898. Hobson reflected frequently on Ruskin's famous dictum, "There is no wealth but life." Rather than focusing on the accumulation of money and finance, Hobson argued that true economic growth was found in the ability of individuals to lead happy and fulfilling lives. In fact, Hobson insisted that traditional measures of wealth had no intrinsic value, mattering only to the extent that they enabled individuals to realize those things that made them truly content as human beings. Hobson argued that one could promote real wealth only if one had a proper understanding of the wider contexts in which real individuals live. In advanced modern societies, that meant understanding the organic nature of contemporary capitalism. Rather than perpetuating the fiction of the self-sufficient entrepreneur or the self-made man, one should explore the ways in which all parts of society interact with one another. These parts interact well or badly to the extent that they promote or hinder individual happiness and contentment. Hobson exposed many ways in which modern capitalism worked very badly from this organic perspective. The same held true at the social and political levels, both of which were riven with artificial hierarchies, working in the interests of elites rather than the good of the whole society. A healthy society was an evolving natural organism, rather than a directed artificial one. Consequently, Hobson rejected both capitalist power and state socialism. Hobson wrote an impressive number of works analyzing the abusive multifaceted processes that characterize the actual workings of modern capitalism. He advocated the creation of a strong state that listened to the demands of society while making the final decisions of matters of public policy. Nevertheless, as a New Liberal, he argued that, while in many circumstances quite extensive state intervention would be needed to ensure that economic and social relationships were nonabusive, the heart of a healthy society remained ultimately in the spontaneous interactions of free individuals and the groups they formed. Ultimately, it was essential that the people could vote out a misguided government.

Hobson never saw political and economic power as exclusively domestic affairs. Even his earliest writings were concerned with the effects of international linkages on the condition of the poor and marginalized around the world. Frequently, he traced these webs of influence to economic poverty and war, not least through the mechanisms of imperialism. He extended and revised the first comprehensive statement of his position, given in *Imperialism* (1902), in a series of South Place Ethical Society lectures given during the 1930s. Increasingly, he sought to develop and promote the possibilities for an international society through which humanity could achieve peace in ways that were not infected by imperialism.

Colin Tyler

See also [Alienation](#); [Capitalism](#); [Darwinism and Social Darwinism](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Empire and Political Thought](#); [Green, Thomas Hill](#); [Hobhouse, Leonard Trelawny](#); [Keynes, John Maynard](#); [Lenin and Leninism](#); [Liberalism](#); [Ruskin, John](#); [Socialism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Human Nature, Theories of

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Human Nature, Theories of

Assumptions about human nature are explicit or implicit in all political philosophies, social programs, ethics, and religions. But the concept of human nature has had many different interpretations, and its ambiguity should be noted.

In asking about human nature, we usually have in mind human dispositions and behavior as we know them, in the society we live in. Early modern thinkers such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau theorized about a supposed state of nature before the advent of government. In fact, humans (and our prehuman ancestors) have always been highly social creatures, so the idea of individuals coming together at some stage of history to form society by a social contract is a myth if taken literally. It was used by Hobbes as a conceptual device to justify the state having a monopoly of coercive force by pointing out the disorder and insecurity that tends to break out when authority fails and the natural selfishness, greed, and fear of individual human beings is not restrained. But the human nature that is revealed when the modern state breaks down may not be the same as the human nature in more primitive society before the advent of state authority, such as in the Indian tribes in America that Locke had in mind.

Another distinction is between a conception of human nature as what is innate in each individual at birth (or for some, given our understanding of genetics, at conception), as opposed to what develops in the adult after maturation, socialization, and education. This distinction has given rise to

endless nature versus nurture debates, especially since the advent of neo-Darwinian accounts of human nature. (The right answer usually seems to be a bit of both but very hard to distinguish.) There is thus a question of how far political programs and political changes can change human nature, for better or for worse.

Another long-standing debate is over whether human nature is basically good, just needing appropriate social conditions in which to flourish, or inherently sinful. Rousseau fostered the belief that what is natural is good, and the unnatural is bad. But air travel, heart surgery, celibacy, contraception, and the consumption of cows' milk can all be said to be unnatural—yet it does not follow that they are wrong. Conversely, it is often said it is natural for human beings to be lustful, selfish, aggressive, and prejudiced against other tribes or nations—but that does not make these tendencies good.

According to optimistic political philosophies (typical of the Enlightenment), cultural progress can be made and average human nature can be improved; according to utopian programs, it can be perfected. But for political realists, human beings will always need discipline and social restraint, and according to religious conceptions, we stand in need of some kind of salvation that goes beyond human ethics and politics.

Plato and Aristotle

The ancient Greek philosopher offered an elaborate analysis of humans and society in his lengthy dialogue, *The Republic*. Plato's theory of individual human nature finds three mental factors at work in us—reason (intellect or rationality), spirit (personality or character, especially courage, self-assertion, and ambition), and appetite (the bodily based desires). Depending on which of these elements is dominant, we get three kinds of people, whose main desire is, respectively, for knowledge, reputation, or material gain. The three factors can conflict, and what is needed for human flourishing is a harmonious combination of them. Reason should, however, be in overall control, for Plato believed that by the use of it we can come to know what is ultimately real and good (i.e., the forms).

But Plato also recognized that we are ineradicably social beings. Individuals are not self-sufficient, and a lone human would miss out on the distinctively human activities of language, learning, cooperative work, friendship, play, art, and politics. He proposed an ambitious program of social engineering, laying great stress on education. Just as the reasoning part of the soul ought to direct the individual, so those people with the most highly developed reason (which includes philosophical, moral, and political knowledge, and wisdom) ought to rule society. So Plato proposed a threefold class division, which included the guardians (the ruling elite), the auxiliaries (state functionaries, soldiers, and police), and the workers (the economic basis).

Plato's great successor Aristotle provided a less utopian, more this-worldly analysis of human nature and society in his *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*, which also strongly emphasized that the best kind of life consists in exercising our rational capacities. But his conception is limited by his assumption of a rigid class structure, the unfitness of women for public roles, the existence of slaves by nature, and the inferiority of barbarians to Greeks.

Medieval Conceptions

Medieval conceptions of human nature from Augustine to Thomas Aquinas synthesized classical ideas with the monotheism of Christianity, Judaism, or Islam. The inherent telos or purpose of human life recognized by the Greeks was identified with the will of God. Our human tendency to diverge from that purpose was seen as needing divine assistance to overcome. Political authority was needed to hold human sinfulness in check and to enable the religious authorities to fulfill their distinctively religious function.

Early Modern Conceptions

With the advent of science, the medieval world picture broke down. Human beings began to be seen just as clever animals with no inherent purpose in life beyond survival and reproduction. In the mid-seventeenth century Hobbes's *Leviathan* was one of the first articulations of a bleakly naturalistic view of human nature, arguing that the only justification for the

existence of the state was to avoid the insecurity and conflict that exists in its absence.

A few decades later, Locke painted a slightly less bleak picture. For him, the pre-governmental state of nature already contains a moral obligation to the effect that no one ought to harm any other in his life, health, liberty, or possessions. But not everyone will respect this moral law, so Locke maintained that in the pre-political state there was a right to punish transgressions and to take reparations. But when there is scarcity of vital resources, forcible competition is likely to ensue, and so Locke like Hobbes recommends civil government as a remedy for the inconveniences of the state of nature.

In his *Discourse on Inequality*, Rousseau argued that the beginning of society had introduced all sorts of unnatural practices and inequalities. He depicted “the noble savage” as wandering in the forests without work, speech, home, war, or relationships and without need of his fellow men and without desire to hurt them. But in *The Social Contract*, Rousseau offered a more positive view of society, arguing that human beings can find their most complete fulfillment in civil society.

Immanuel Kant

Immanuel Kant’s critical philosophy echoes the classical views of Plato and Aristotle in saying that it is our human nature to exercise both theoretical and practical rationality. Contrary to other Enlightenment philosophers such as David Hume, who found the source of morality in feeling, Kant strongly insisted on the rational nature of the “categorical imperatives” of ethics. For him, the objective foundation for ethics lies in the principle of respect for persons as rational beings and ends in themselves. He thus provided a secular basis for the recognition of universal human rights.

But we are not purely rational beings, we are finite creatures with bodily appetites, and desires for love, approval, status, and power, so there is a constant struggle within us between selfishness and morality. In his late work on religion, Kant acknowledged the radical evil in human nature, namely our great difficulty in doing what we ought to do, and our tendency

to adulterate morality with other motives. Our unsocial sociability consists in our need and desire to be members of society combined with our tendency to be selfish and competitive. Kant placed his hopes in a gradual improvement in individuals and society through a purified form of ethical-religious community and progress in education, culture, and democracy.

Karl Marx

Karl Marx, writing in the mid-nineteenth century, presented a materialist theory of history, outlining the development of human society through a series of economic stages, from ancient slavery through medieval feudalism to capitalism, which he predicted would be superseded by communism. His crucial claim is that the prevailing type of human nature and society depends on the mode of production of the necessities of life.

In his *Theses on Feuerbach*, Marx wrote, “The real nature of man is the totality of social relations,” and elsewhere, he wrote, “All history is nothing but a continuous transformation of human nature.” These quotes have been widely taken by many followers of Marx to mean that there is no such thing as a fixed human nature so that what is true of people in one society or period may not be true in another place or time. As the economic basis of society changes, laws, politics, morals, ideology, and religion will change too. Even the ways in which we produce our food and bring up our children are socially learned. So what seems instinctive or natural in one society or epoch—for example, a certain role for women—may be quite different in another. Not everything about human beings can be explained in terms of facts about individuals; the kind of society they live in must be considered too.

But it does not follow that everything about human beings can be explained in terms of sociology and economics, and nor did Marx think so. There is our biological nature—the fact that human infants are born helpless and need an extended period of care and socialization to become adults. Marx also recognized that we are active beings, different from the other animals because we produce our means of subsistence. Moreover, he associates a value judgment with this activity, namely that the kind of life that is appropriately fulfilling for us involves rational and purposive activity. This

value judgment comes out in his diagnosis of human alienation in industrial labor, his passionate concern with social justice, and in his utopian ideal of a future society in which everyone can be free to cultivate his or her talents (Geras 1983).

From Darwin to Evolutionary Psychology

In contrast to the socialist or communist ideal, Social Darwinists such as Herbert Spencer in England and W. G. Sumner in the United States appealed to Darwinian ideas to justify the free market economy. They interpreted the phrase “survival of the fittest” not just in the factual sense that those individuals best fitted to the prevailing environment will tend to leave more progeny, but in the normative sense that it is a good thing that the less “fit” should not survive or reproduce. This reasoning seems to justify the ruthless neglect of the weak, but it leaves out of consideration our human tendencies to cooperation; it treats individuals or families as isolated units without acknowledging their membership in larger social groups that have profound effects on their identities, obligations, and rights.

In the mid-twentieth century, there was a neo-Darwinian revolution in biology when discoveries in genetics revealed the biochemical mechanism of natural selection and studies of animal behavior showed how much of it is innate. Evolutionary accounts of human nature have been widely promoted. Edward O. Wilson proposed a new discipline of sociobiology, which he claimed would revolutionize the social sciences and in which he offered explanations of our aggression, sexuality, altruism, ethics, and religion in evolutionary terms. But some other biologists hotly criticized both the scientific claims of sociobiology and what they saw as its reactionary implications of limits to programs of social reform (Rose, Lewontin, and Kamin 1984).

In recent years, there has been an explosion of evolutionary psychology (Pinker 2002; Ridley 1996; Wright 1994) offering theories of genetically based human predispositions seen as the result of a long history of evolution, whose expression will depend on culture and individual development and learning. Yet much of this remains controversial because (a) it is so difficult to distinguish the contributions of heredity and

upbringing and (b) because of the moral and political involvements of the whole topic of human nature and behavior (Clark 2002; Dupre 2001; O'Hear 1997). Whenever claims are made about our evolutionary nature, or about innate differences between human races, sexes, or social classes, we must be alert to the possibility that such assertions may serve the interest of some social groups rather than others. Factual evidence can show only how people have so far behaved in certain forms of society—but that does not show that change is impossible. Feminist theorists have rightly asked whether existing differences between men and women are a matter of innate, biological, natural tendencies or whether they have been produced by forms of cultural conditioning serving the perceived interests of men (Jaggar 1983; Mill 1988).

Postmodernism and the Enlightenment

Those who see us as living in a “postmodern” epoch often pour scorn on the Enlightenment. A heavyweight attack has been mounted by Alasdair MacIntyre in his diagnosis of the parlous state of twentieth-century moral philosophy. He argues that the Enlightenment project of justifying morality failed because we have been so obsessed with the kind of rationality shown in the physical sciences that we could not find a place for any teleological view of human nature as having an essence that defines our true purpose. In MacIntyre's view, this has meant that our moral vocabulary has been cut off from its roots, so we can find no firm foothold on which to resist the slide toward individualism and moral subjectivism.

Certainly, it has been characteristic of much moral and political thought since the seventeenth century to assume that there are no objective values or purposes in human life, that it is up to individuals to make their own decisions on such matters, and (with dubious consistency) that human nature is almost infinitely malleable by social and political changes. Hence, the prevalence of liberal and perhaps postmodern political philosophies see the only justified purpose of government as to protect and enhance individual freedom. But we have noted here that both Kant and Marx, who are often credited with such a view, did not, on closer inspection, entirely endorse it and have more in common with classic and religious philosophies than MacIntyre acknowledges.

Leslie Stevenson

See also [Alienation](#); [Darwinism and Social Darwinism](#); [Feminism](#); [Individualism](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [State of Nature](#); [Utopianism](#)

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Humanitarian Intervention

Humanitarian intervention

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Humanitarian Intervention

The question, “When it is legitimate to intervene in a sovereign state for the purpose of halting or preventing a mass atrocity?” has moved from the periphery to the center of the international political agenda. Despite lacking a universally agreed definition, the term *humanitarian intervention* dominates the discourse surrounding this issue. While there is general consensus on the importance of humanitarian intervention, it is also one of the most divisive issues in contemporary international relations, with the term itself increasingly a source of controversy.

Definition

Myriad, often contradictory, definitions of humanitarian intervention exist. The term is widely used in legal, political, and philosophical literature, and the definition employed tends to reflect the field of the analyst. The major contention that surrounds the definition of the term derives largely from the normative assumptions inherent in the word *humanitarian*. The use of this subjective adjective necessarily complicates the formation of an objective definition given that the word *humanitarian*, to a large extent, constitutes a positive value judgment. *Humanitarianism* and *humanitarian action* are terms widely used among aid workers and nongovernmental organizations. In this context, the term humanitarian is used to denote an altruistic, apolitical concern for human welfare. Linking humanitarianism to military action is, for many, inherently contradictory, and thus, the term is rejected

by those who wish to preserve the neutrality and nonmilitary nature of humanitarianism.

Nonetheless, while concerns exist about the very validity and efficacy of the term, it remains widely used, and it is possible to identify three generic themes common to the majority of definitions. Definitions generally agree that:

the intervener must be a third party to the conflict and from a different state,

the action must be taken without the consent of the host state,

the action must involve the use of force, and

the action must be motivated, to a significant extent, by humanitarian concerns.

The latter point is particularly contentious; some academics, most notably Nicholas Wheeler (2002), have disregarded the importance of motives altogether. While the majority of definitions do emphasize the importance of humanitarian motivations, two issues arise. First, to what extent must the motivation be humanitarian? A purely humanitarian motive is widely deemed too onerous a requirement, though there is no consensus on when the degree of self-interest trumps the humanitarian credentials and the action becomes simply a military intervention. Second, it is in practice very difficult to determine the true motivation behind a particular intervention given that the public justifications offered by interveners may not constitute the truth.

Definitions of humanitarian intervention do not generally refer to its legality. This fact reflects a broad consensus that the legality of an action has little bearing on its putative status as a humanitarian intervention. The legality of humanitarian intervention, particularly unilateral intervention, is keenly contested, however.

History

Questions about the morality of the use of force have been posed, in some form, for millennia. The evolution of the just war tradition from Augustine (354–430) on incorporated many of the themes that still dominate the debate on humanitarian intervention today. The just war tradition, however, concerns itself with determining justifications for the use of force generally, though particularly in self-defense, whereas humanitarian intervention has a narrower focus derived from the evolution of the sovereign state and the issue of protecting foreigners.

Debates on humanitarian intervention became more focused, and arguably more problematic, as international society became organized into a community of sovereign states in the seventeenth century. This new systemic configuration was based on the principle of noninterference *cuius regio eius religio* (whose region, his religion) enunciated at the 1555 Peace of Augsburg and later affirmed by the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia. The very idea of sovereignty implies inviolability, the primacy of the principle of nonintervention, and thus a rejection of international jurisdiction in favor of national law. Indeed, the term *humanitarian intervention* was first used in 1880—by William Edward Hall—and can be understood only in the context of the prevalence of the principle of territorial integrity. This was a conspicuously European norm, however, with vast areas of the globe deemed to be *terra nullius* and open to intervention and subjugation. Such colonialism was routinely justified as benevolent and portrayed as the white man's burden or in French, *mission civilatrice*.

As states assumed more formal legal powers and entitlements, the asymmetry between the rights of states and the rights of the individuals within them increased. Thus, particularly after the signing of the United Nations Charter in 1945, the status of humanitarian intervention became more ambiguous and contentious, as state officials could claim their equal right of behalf of a nation to deny equal rights to citizens within their nation. While the Charter included certain references to human rights, the codification of sovereignty and proscriptions on external interference contained in Articles 2.1 and 2.7 were more explicit.

During the Cold War, the nuclear standoff between East and West sidelined the issue of responding to intrastate human rights violations. Both the United States and the Soviet Union were primarily concerned with maintaining order within their respective spheres of influence and a balance of power internationally. Additionally, following decolonization, the norm of nonintervention was championed by the many newly independent states that considered sovereign inviolability to be a bulwark against renewed external interference. Three cases regularly cited as examples of humanitarian intervention during the Cold War are India's intervention in East Pakistan in 1971, Vietnam's intervention in Cambodia in 1978, and Tanzania's intervention in Uganda in 1979. In each case, however, international reaction varied and the motives of the intervening parties were unquestionably mixed.

The tension between state sovereignty and ostensibly universal human rights became especially keen in the post-Cold War era. The combination of Western hegemony, the primacy of the liberal democratic state, and the effects of globalization led to a dramatic increase in humanitarian advocacy and support for external intervention. Many crises, such as dissolution of the former Yugoslavia, the genocide in Rwanda, the conflict in Darfur, and the violence accompanying the 2011 Arab Spring—especially in Libya and Syria—have served as catalysts for often heated debate on this issue.

The controversy surrounding NATO's intervention in Kosovo sparked renewed interest in humanitarian intervention and led to the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty's (ICISS) seminal 2001 report *The Responsibility to Protect*, which claimed to constitute a new template for the relationship between states, their citizens, and the international community.

Legal Status

There is much debate about the legality of humanitarian intervention, and the issue has led to questioning of the very efficacy of international law. Under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, the Security Council is empowered to sanction military action to “maintain or restore international peace and security.” An action sanctioned by the Security Council to

prevent or halt a mass atrocity would thus constitute a legal humanitarian intervention, the March 2011 intervention in Libya being arguably an archetypal example. Humanitarian interventions undertaken without the Security Council's authorization are of more contentious legality. NATO's intervention against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999 over the treatment of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo was welcomed by many as a humanitarian intervention, although the prevailing view is that it was technically illegal. This ostensibly illegal but legitimate intervention led many to argue that international law should be reformed and that the sanctioning of humanitarian intervention should not be the preserve of the United Nations Security Council given China's and Russia's record on human rights. A vocal constituency emerged in favor of rules on the use of force based more on natural law and reflective of the varying moral rectitude of states.

At the 2005 United Nations World Summit, states unanimously endorsed the principle of the responsibility to protect (R2P). Constituting an amended version of the principles first articulated by the ICISS, R2P establishes the responsibility of all states to protect their citizens from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing. It was also agreed that the international community had a responsibility to react if the host state was unable or unwilling to do so. While this agreement was heralded by many as a triumph, others have argued that the principles on R2P outlined in paragraphs 138 and 139 of the World Summit *Outcome Document* merely reconfirm previously existing rights and responsibilities. Legally, humanitarian intervention remains the preserve of the Security Council, and thus all action is potential prey to the veto powers of the five permanent members: China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Objections

The most commonly advanced objection to humanitarian intervention is that it constitutes a means by which powerful states can subjugate the weak. History is replete with examples of states justifying invasion and occupation on spurious humanitarian grounds. Most infamously, Adolf Hitler portrayed Germany's invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1939 as a

humanitarian intervention to protect the German-Czech minority. In recent years, the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 ignited controversy precisely because of the largely, though not exclusively, *ex post facto* humanitarian justifications offered by the intervening coalition. Humanitarian intervention is, therefore, dismissed by some as a form of neocolonialism, with control of oil being the dominant contemporary concern.

A related objection, but less concerned with motives, is the suggestion that humanitarian intervention constitutes the illegitimate imposition of a particular set of Western norms or values. Often termed the relativist position, this critique rejects the idea of universal human rights in favor of a culturally divergent plurality of norms. Since the World Summit in 2005, however, the grounds for intervention have been explicitly limited to four crimes: genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing. The relativist argument is largely untenable in the context of these crimes and the universal consensus that they are proscribed.

A further objection is that voiced by certain realists who argue that the primary interest of states should be to preserve national security and maintain international peace and stability. Intervention, it is argued, whatever the pretext, causes conflict and instability. States that claim to be using force for the universal moral good, it is argued, are typically lying but are also a threat to international peace and stability. Increased intervention leads to a more violent world, which by definition claims more lives than nonintervention even if a particular state is oppressive domestically. Intervening to protect the oppressed in one state will additionally, some argue, encourage disgruntled groups in other states to provoke their state into committing domestic crimes in the hope that this situation will compel external forces to intervene. Thus, crises that could have been settled domestically and with limited force become internationalized and bloodier.

The poor record of humanitarian intervention is also often cited by critics. In many cases, intervening to stop violence has not created lasting peace, and the interveners have been forced to maintain costly and often protracted commitments in states marred by deep societal cleavages. The ongoing international commitments in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan, as well as

the bloody aftermath of the intervention in Iraq, give evidence of the limitations of external intervention and state building.

Contemporary Relevance

Due to the disrepute associated with the term itself, many advocates of external intervention for humanitarian purposes have increasingly framed their discourse in the rhetoric of the R2P. This phrase incorporates more than military intervention, however, and humanitarian intervention remains both a more established and narrowly focused term. The intrastate violence that accompanied the Arab Spring precipitated a rejuvenation of interest in humanitarian intervention and renewed critiques of the inconsistent international response to intra-state crises. While the intervention in Libya in March 2011 was widely welcomed, even by the Arab League, the nonintervention in Syria was cited as evidence of the hypocrisy of the Security Council and the prevalence of geopolitics.

Contemporary debates focus largely on two issues: first, determining who has the right to intervene and whether existing laws on the use of force should be amended; and second, how best to engage in a humanitarian intervention and subsequently rebuild war-torn societies. Because intrastate crises have been a perennial feature of international relations for centuries and show few signs of abatement, the issue of humanitarian intervention appears destined to remain a key issue in international relations and one that raises profound questions about international law, universal morality, and the role of the modern state.

Aidan Hehir

See also [Genocide](#); [Sovereignty](#), [State](#)

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Hume, David

David Hume (1711–76) was a best-selling historian, essayist, polymath, and enormously influential and important philosopher of the eighteenth-century Scottish Enlightenment. He was both a philosophical radical and a political moderate. Hume was intellectually skeptical, particularly about the scope and power of reason and supernatural beliefs (such as the existence of God) and averse to the airy sciences of traditional metaphysics, preferring to restrict himself to fact, experience, and observation, often with devastating effects. He had a very keen awareness of the strange infirmities of human understanding, which disposed him toward doubt and epistemological caution. Politically, he was essentially a pragmatist who eschewed strongly ideological positions.

Life and Background

Hume was born in Edinburgh to a respectable, moderately prosperous family whose home (Ninewells) was in the lowland Borders region of Scotland where he grew up. At a precociously young age, ten or twelve, he started studying law at the University of Edinburgh, where he bit into the apple of knowledge that left him with a powerful distaste for the law and for everything but “Philosophy and general Learning.” Unfortunately, as the younger son of a family of only moderate wealth, Hume could not afford to live the life of a gentleman (i.e., someone who did not need a job to maintain himself), so he initially returned to Ninewells after abandoning his

study of the law so that he could concentrate on developing his own philosophical ideas. This, however, eventually led him to the brink of a mental and emotional collapse, after which he moved to the village of La Flèche in Anjou, France, where he lived frugally and wrote his first (and most ambitious and influential) philosophical work, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, which he finished at the age of just twenty-six. The first two books were published anonymously in London in 1739, with the third following in 1740. To Hume's great disappointment, the work fell dead-born from the press, failing to find a significant readership and or even to evoke a critical reaction. Two volumes of *Essays, Moral and Political* appeared in 1741 and 1742. On this basis, Hume applied for the Chair in Ethics and Pneumatical Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh in 1745, but was passed over primarily because of his heterodox religious views at a time when Scotland was still a predominantly devout and God-fearing nation dominated by an influential and well-placed clergy. His application for the Chair of Logic at the University of Glasgow six years later met the same fate, and for essentially the same reason. International fame had to wait until Hume published his best-selling, six-volume *History of England*, which he wrote while librarian of the Edinburgh Faculty of Advocates, in which role he was reprimanded for ordering obscene books, as understood in Scotland, which was still predominantly Calvinist. His *History* was published between 1754 and 1762 so that by the time he arrived in Paris as the private secretary to the British ambassador to France, Lord Hertford, in 1763, he was a major celebrity and the toast of the salons where he enjoyed the company of the leading French thinkers and writers of the age, including Denis Diderot, Jean le Rond d'Alembert, and the Baron d'Holbach, who affectionately called him le bon David for his affable nature and tolerant, skeptical outlook. He was as far from the severe, dour stereotype of the puritanical Scot as it was possible to be. Writing later in *My Own Life* ([1776] 1980), Hume characterized himself as "a man of mild dispositions, of command of temper, of an open, social, and cheerful humour [*sic*], capable of attachment, but little susceptible of enmity, and of great moderation in all my passions" (Hume [1776] 1980, 615). In France, he was often gently mocked for his gaucherie, provincial manners, and heavily accented French, while he, for his part, harbored reservations about the excessive civilities of Paris. Even so, he found life there highly congenial and even considered moving to Paris permanently: "There is a real satisfaction in living in

Paris,” he wrote, “from the great number of sensible, knowing, and polite company with which the city abounds above all places in the universe” (Hume [1776] 1980, 614).

After three highly successful years in the French capital, Hume retired to Britain not only independent, but opulent, eventually resettling in Edinburgh, where he enjoyed the company of other luminaries of the Scottish Enlightenment, including Adam Smith, Adam Ferguson, William Robertson, and Joseph Black, all of whom were fellow members of the so-called Poker Club. He entertained frequently and enjoyed cooking, especially his specialty of sheep’s head soup and beef with cabbage. He later reflected that these years might be the ones he would most like to live over again. On his deathbed, Hume read the pagan humorist Lucian, much to the annoyance of his religious opponents. He died there peacefully and with admirable equanimity in 1776. His controversial and devastating *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (1779) was published shortly thereafter, reinforcing his reputation for philosophical acuity and religious skepticism. He had arranged for his compatriot the eminent architect Robert Adam to design his tomb, with only his name and dates on it. He was buried at Calton Hill cemetery overlooking Edinburgh. Hume’s close friend the economist and moralist Smith eloquently eulogized him as being as close to perfectly wise and virtuous as a person can be.

Philosophy

One of Hume’s boldest and most original arguments occurs in the first book of his *Treatise of Human Nature*, where he argues that the common belief in natural causation is rationally groundless. The relationship between cause and effect—as when, for example, one billiard ball strikes another thereby causing the latter to move—cannot really be inferred by reason, as the philosopher René Descartes had argued it could. According to Hume, the constant conjunction of two objects typically leads us to assume that they must be causally related to each other, but this assumption is actually unwarranted by reason, according to Hume. All that we can really say about them is that their relationship is based on our past experience of them, and we have no reason to assume that the future will necessarily be like the past. Even so, he thought that we tend to develop mental habits based on such

inductive, probabilistic conjunctions that cannot really be deduced by a priori reasoning. These habits of mental association are often so strong that we just assume that objects must be linked causally, a conclusion that is nothing more than a projection of our own assumptions on to the world rather than something that can be established by demonstrative reasoning.

Hume believed that our minds tend to assume many such fictions for which there is really no rational justification at all, although such beliefs may be explicable in natural terms. For example, he cast doubt on the common belief that there is such a thing as a self that persists throughout one's life. As an empiricist, Hume thought that our perceptions are based on sensory impressions. In fact, we have no single, continuous impression of our own self over time, only constantly changing impressions and sensations that we do not rationally know to be related to a single, enduring identity. Just as we habitually ascribe an identity to external objects that we may regularly observe in the world, so we tend to assume the same about our own inner self, even though, in reality, identity is not something that really belongs to these different perceptions and unites them; rather, "it is merely a quality, which we attribute to them, because of the union of their ideas in the imagination, when we reflect upon them" (Hume [1739] 1978, Book I, Part IV, sec. VI). Hume described the mind as a type of theater where "several perceptions successively make their appearance, pass, re-pass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations," which typically leads us to the unwarranted belief that there is a persisting self that underlies our constantly ever-changing perceptions. In answering the question, "What does one really see when introspecting on one's mind?" Hume wrote,

For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception. (Hume [1739] 1978, Book I, Part IV, sec. VI)

On the perennial debate between free will and determinism, Hume was a classical compatibilist, like Thomas Hobbes. He defined liberty as "a power

of acting or not acting, according to the determinations of the will” (Hume [1739] 1978, Book I, Part IV, sect. VI). Thus, all human actions are the consequences of causal necessity. Yet everyone is free to the extent that he is “not a prisoner and in chains.” Hume held that such causal necessity is entirely consistent with moral responsibility.

Another important and influential example of Hume’s skepticism in his *Treatise* concerns the difficulty of deriving values from facts. On this subject, he merely observed a common tendency for people to jump from descriptive statements (e.g., he is short) to prescriptive statements (e.g., he ought to receive less) without any bridging argument explaining how to get from the one to the other. In the twentieth century, the Cambridge moral philosopher G. E. Moore labeled this intellectual leap from *is* to *ought* “the naturalistic fallacy” and developed Hume’s passing observation into a systematic rejection of ethical naturalism in his book *Principia Ethica* (1903).

Hume denied that either God or reason could really provide a plausible basis for our ethical beliefs. He not only doubted the existence of God, but also was highly critical of what he saw as the disastrous moral and political consequences of religions in human history, particularly dogmatic monotheistic faiths such as Christianity and Islam, which he compared unfavorably to the polytheistic faiths of antiquity. He also believed that reason is the “slave of the passions” with no power to motivate human action or tell us which ends we ought to pursue. He quipped that “Tis not contrary to reason to prefer the destruction of the whole world to the scratching of my finger” (Hume [1739] 1978, Book II, Part II, sec. 3), although he meant this quite literally. However, Hume shared the belief common among philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment that we have natural (and therefore universal) virtues such as gratitude, kindness, patience, due pride, and sympathy for other human beings in their suffering, virtues that only motivate us to act when they engage our passions with sufficient force to overcome contrary passions. These natural virtues have been supplemented throughout history by artificial virtues such as chastity, promise keeping, and justice, the rules of which have been devised to “best serve public utility.” Such virtues depend on conventional rules rather than arising spontaneously from our nature. Hume realistically recognized that

we are also prone to be selfish, that human nature contains impulses that pull in both directions and needs to be judiciously constrained and tempered by convention and custom.

As he did with much of the rest of his *Treatise*, Hume later revised that part of the work that dealt with morality and republished it in 1751 as an *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*. Although he viewed this work as clearly the best of all his writings, he was disappointed that it too received little attention. He had earlier revised and published the first book of the *Treatise* as a separate *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748), and he later shortened the second book, which appeared as a revised essay “Of the Passions” in Hume’s *Four Dissertations* (1757). All of these extensive recastings of his troubled intellectual offspring reflect Hume’s verdict that he had been “guilty of a very usual indiscretion in going to press too early” (Hume [1776] 1980, 612) when he first published the *Treatise* in his late twenties. He eventually recommended against reading the original *Treatise*, advice that, fortunately, few philosophers have followed.

Politics

Hume’s politics were almost as complicated as his philosophical views and defy easy classification. He complained that, with the publication of his *History of England*, he was “assailed by one cry of reproach, disapprobation and even detestation: English, Scotch, and Irish, Whig and Tory, churchman and sectary, freethinker and religionist, united in their rage” against him for one reason or another (Hume [1776] 1980, 614). Of his political outlook in general, he said in a 1756 letter to John Clephane, “My view of things are more conformable to Whig principles; my representations of persons to Tory prejudices.” Hume had a realistic appreciation of the imperfection of societies and the limitations of human reason, which inclined him to favor moderate, pragmatic reforms and gradual, piecemeal change over political idealism and violent revolution, both of which he found temperamentally and philosophically uncongenial. He thought that rebellion was advisable only in cases of extreme tyranny or prolonged abuse. As long as customs and rulers kept the peace and did not unduly oppress or exploit their subjects, they ought to be obeyed. Such conservatism led Thomas Jefferson

to brand Hume as a Tory and ban his *History of England* from the University of Virginia (which he had founded). However, Hume was broadly supportive of the Glorious Revolution of 1688 to 1690 (and therefore no straightforward Tory) and expressed some sympathy for the American colonists in their dispute with the British Crown. He was also in favor of freedom of the press, religious toleration, and private commerce and spoke out on behalf of an extended franchise, separate and decentralized political power, and free government. Although he did not regard private property as a natural right, he defended free trade, welcomed the civilizing effects of *doux commerce* and the trade in luxury goods. His account of the “polite” culture attendant upon the progress of commercial society anticipated the central arguments of Smith’s *The Wealth of Nations*, which he praised in turn. Nonetheless Samuel Johnson hoarily dismissed Hume as a mere “Tory by chance” who “has no principle.”

Religion

Hume was a religious skeptic (a term he often applied to himself), and concluded that it was not rationally possible either to affirm or deny the existence of God with any certainty. This belief set him apart from both the deist mainstream of the Enlightenment and the more orthodox religious establishment that still dominated eighteenth-century Scotland. The Church of Scotland seriously considered bringing charges of infidelity against Hume for his heterodox religious views, costing him the academic career that he had coveted. Even so, both Hume’s atheistic sympathizers and his zealous religious opponents are wrong to have attributed atheism to him. When asked if he was an atheist, he would say that he did not have enough faith to believe that there was no God. Hume was not certain that there was no God; he just did not see a good enough reason to suppose that there was. Among the least convincing reasons for believing in God, he thought, was the so-called argument from design, which he subjected to relentless criticism in his posthumously published *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, which are partially based on Cicero’s *De Natura Deorum*. He was similarly harsh in his attitude to the existence of miracles on the grounds that a miracle implies “a transgression of a law of nature by a particular volition of the Deity,” something that is a clear violation of all prior experience and therefore far less probable than alternative explanations,

such as that people lie or are deluded in their perceptions (Hume [1902] 1972, 116). Hume also denied the existence of original sin, defended the legitimacy of suicide, and argued against immortality of the soul—all positions that did little to endear him to the religiously orthodox.

Influence and Legacy

Although Hume was much better known in his own lifetime for his best-selling historical writings than for his largely overlooked philosophy, the reverse is true now. Today, his *History of England* is much less read than his philosophical works, particularly his precocious masterpiece *The Treatise of Human Nature*. He is now commonly seen as one of the most important and influential philosophers of the eighteenth century who famously woke Immanuel Kant from his dogmatic slumbers and provoked him to instigate a “Copernican revolution” in philosophy. The list of thinkers influenced by Hume’s skeptical ideas (Adam Smith, Arthur Schopenhauer, Charles Darwin, Jeremy Bentham, Alfred Ayer, Albert Einstein, and Karl Popper, to name a few) is impressive and attests to his importance in the history of Western thought.

Graeme Garrard

See also [Capitalism](#); [Conservatism](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [English Enlightenment](#); [French Enlightenment](#); [Liberalism](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Scottish Enlightenment](#); [Smith, Adam](#)

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I

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Idealism

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Idealism

The era of German idealism, extending roughly from the late eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century, stands out as one of the most profound and prolific periods of intellectual history. Colored by the disenchanting aftermath of the French Revolution on the one hand and the Enlightenment philosophy of Immanuel Kant on the other, an entire generation of German intellectuals began to articulate the deeply political implications of a “critical” philosophy that located the ultimate source of epistemic and moral authority in the concept of an autonomous, rational subject. Although the overlapping strands of Kantian and post-Kantian philosophy—systematic, romantic, speculative, and theological—varied markedly with respect to both theoretical orientation and methodology, their efforts are broadly united in an attempt to ground political reform in philosophical principles derived from human consciousness. Although many of the epistemological and metaphysical commitments grounding those efforts were already losing momentum by the 1830s, the legacy of German idealism’s unique synthesis of philosophical and political activity has had a distinct and lasting impact on radically divergent forms of Western political thought.

Kantian Idealism

Idealism, broadly construed as the philosophical doctrine that reality is ultimately mental rather than a material construct (as realism holds), had

taken many forms prior to Kant (e.g., Plato, George Berkeley, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, and Christian Wolff). Kant rejected the “dogmatic” idealism of his predecessors and developed a *transcendental idealism* that sought to reconcile a mind-dependent account of experience with the empiricist philosophy of John Locke and David Hume. This shift in metaphysics—which Kant famously likens to the Copernican Revolution—explains the possibility of experience in terms of the spatial, temporal, and intuitional form that our faculties assign to sensory content. Reason can generate warranted conclusions only about things as they appear in experience but denies all knowledge of things as they are in themselves, including the will, the soul, and God. In other words, Kant divides reality between *phenomena* and *noumena*, restricting knowledge exclusively to the former.

This epistemological division in turn explains the possibility of an autonomous will. We cannot know the will, but reason can, and indeed must, posit a free will as the condition of morality. Operating outside the sphere of deterministic natural laws, the will binds itself to a universal, rational law of morality, which it gives itself in the form of a categorical imperative. Kant’s political philosophy is, accordingly, a manifestation of this central account of autonomy. Although he penned several popular essays on political matters late in his career, his legacy as a political thinker is secured in his theoretical and moral philosophy, which has had a particularly strong influence on modern political liberalism. Most notably, John Rawls’s notion of an “original position” from which to determine justice fairly and impartially, as expounded in *A Theory of Justice* (1971), is deeply and explicitly indebted to Kant’s rational procedure for determining moral duty.

If, however, we step back and trace the lineage of Kant’s philosophy through the classic triumvirate of nineteenth-century German idealists—Hegel, Fichte, and Schelling—we observe a far more complex and variegated picture of idealism’s legacy within modern political thought.

German Idealism

Fichte

The comprehensive statement of Johann Gottlieb Fichte's philosophical thought is contained in the *Wissenschaftslehre*, roughly translated as "The Science of Knowledge." Although it ranges over many philosophical topics, its overarching purpose is to solve a problem of autonomy inherited from Kant: Exactly *how* does binding oneself to a self-legislated law take place? Fichte aims to answer the question of what it means to bind oneself to a law of one's own rational making. His answer resides in the metaphysical concept of a "self-positing ego" that asserts itself as the ultimate source of freedom and normativity. The absolute and unconditioned principle of philosophy, Fichte argues, is intuited in the "I" of self-consciousness, in which any discursively self-conscious being participates, and through which all other existence is posited by negation, as "not-I." This move resolves the Kantian dilemma by grounding autonomy in the impersonal I's inherent activity. Yet it raises important difficulties regarding the normative status of *other* conscious beings. Fichte's attempt to accommodate intersubjective consciousness by describing the limits, or "checks," that the external world and other human subjects place on absolute free activity leads him to articulate the essential structures of mutual recognition that come to form the basis of Hegel's account of social freedom.

In the second part of the *Wissenschaftslehre*, "The Foundations of Natural Right," Fichte applies his notion of intersubjectivity to a theory of the state. Departing significantly from Kant, he asserts that law is in principle independent of morality, and he seeks a transcendental justification of legal right, grounded in the possibility of self-conscious agency. Many critics regard Fichte's attempt to give an a priori deduction of legal and political institutions as both conceptually and methodologically flawed. Recent scholars, however, emphasize the more pragmatic and materialist dimensions of his political thought. His account of property, for example, more closely resembles a kind of proto-Marxist socialism than the standard liberal view he is generally thought to represent. More generally, Fichte understands individual rights as the outcome of recognitive acts between free and rational beings; in other words, a particular status (e.g., property owner and citizen) is first *granted* through social relations, and only then codified into law. Natural right, therefore, consists in those conditions under

which it is possible for legal and political institutions to give rise to and embody the basic equality of intersubjective recognition.

Although recent scholarship gives a more interesting and appealing account of Fichte's thought, it has proved more difficult to ignore the pronounced nationalism and overt anti-Semitism with which it is closely connected. Indeed, his frequent reference to the virtues of "Germanness" is often cited as the intellectual origin of National Socialism.

Schelling

Following Fichte, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling promised a more adequate foundation for, and completion of, Kant's philosophy. Originally trained in a Protestant seminary in Tübingen (where he roomed with Hegel and the poet Friedrich Hölderlin), Schelling was a precocious and productive thinker whose early published works earned him a professorship at Jena at the young age of 23. Despite a successful career, Schelling is often considered a transitional figure between the philosophies of Fichte and Hegel—a conception that scholars have only recently begun to challenge.

Schelling's philosophy defies simple characterization for several reasons. First, he adopts a difficult style of prose, which becomes increasingly opaque and metaphorical throughout his career. Second, his philosophy is a patchwork of ideas selectively chosen from Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant, and Fichte, where no single view is easily discernible. More significantly, he adopted, abandoned, and frequently rejected a range of philosophical positions over the course of his writings. Yet, throughout the many phases of his intellectual development—"philosophy of nature," "identity philosophy," "reflective philosophy," "positive philosophy," "philosophy of mythology," etcetera—Schelling maintains a foundational interest in the Kantian problem of autonomy. His early writings articulate a compatibilist account of freedom as a historical, developmental form of self-legislation. This was an important influence on the early work of Jürgen Habermas, who argues (in his doctoral dissertation) that Schelling's metaphysics prefigures the conceptual transition from idealism to materialism. Schelling's own solution to the problem of autonomy is to collapse the

distinction between “subjective” thought and “objective” nature in the notion of an unconditioned, undifferentiated, active “Absolute.” This represents a broader strategy to ground the conceptual dualisms of Kant and Fichte in the monist metaphysics of Spinoza. Unlike his idealist counterparts, however, the romantic-minded Schelling regards the nature and ultimate activity of this essential unity as accessible through nondiscursive forms of aesthetic experience.

Among the idealists, Schelling’s philosophy shows the least interest in explicitly political topics. His increasing commitment to metaphysical theology, however, lends his thought an air of conservatism that would implicate him in the reactionary politics of the Prussian government. Exploiting Schelling’s intellectual stature, King Friedrich Wilhelm IV appointed Schelling to the chair at the University of Berlin, where he was famously instructed to “stamp out the dragon seed of Hegelian pantheism.” The plan backfired: Schelling found himself lecturing to empty halls, and instead of quelling the revolutionary fervor, leftist intellectuals were further emboldened in their critique of Prussian authority. Importantly, his theology-laden rhetoric approving the state’s exploits served to remind the newly emerging school of Hegelians—including the young Karl Marx—that effective political critique would also require a thorough critique of religion.

Hegel

In many ways, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel continues what he sees as the revolutionary task inaugurated by Kant, namely, developing a rationalist political theory together with a systematic account of human freedom. In the so-called “minor” political writings, Hegel argues for the rational necessity of constitutional reform, national unity, centralized government, and a range of other historically specific topics. Similarly, his major political work of 1821, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, sets out to establish a rational basis for a theory of natural rights. What sets Hegel apart from the Enlightenment tradition, however, is a teleological conception of rationality and freedom as socially and historically structured.

The tripartite division of *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* reflects the dialectical-historical progression of political self-realization within distinct “spheres of right.” In “abstract right,” which Hegel identifies with the contractualist theories of Hobbes and Locke, the conception of right has only specific legal content (e.g., rights property and contract). With Kant in mind, Hegel describes “Morality” as the stage in which humans develop an appreciation for both the universal will and the moral duties implied, on the one hand, and the importance of substantive individual well-being, on the other. These opposing claims are finally reconciled in *Sittlichkeit*, or “ethical life,” in which freedom shows itself to be the rational synthesis of the individual subjective will with objective duties, both moral and political. Autonomy, in other words, is achieved only through natural social relations beginning with the family and proceeding to the higher forms of civil society and the constitutional state.

Building on Fichte’s insights regarding the recognitive structure of individual rights, Hegel argues that social freedom ultimately founds legal rights, not vice versa. Freedom, understood as the possibility for self-realization, implies a conception of the good life that is inevitably informed by a culturally and historically particular set of normative social institutions. Rights emerge within, and because of, the existing normative structures of a given way of life. The essence of the state, then, is to establish and maintain the kinds of institutions that unify the universal will with the individual wills of its citizens.

Hegel’s political philosophy has been subject to criticism from both the left and the right. Citing his advocacy of a constitutional monarchy, Hegel is frequently branded a reactionary conservative and apologist for Prussian authority. Likewise, his famously cryptic remark that “the rational is the real and the real is the rational” is often read as an implicit political quietism. On the other hand, Hegel’s conception of freedom as self-determination can strike the modern liberal as elitist and paternalistic, as Isaiah Berlin points out in “Two Concepts of Freedom.” It is important to keep in mind, however, that Hegel’s primary aim is to ground the legitimacy of any state in rational justification, which requires mutual recognition of rights instead of either an arbitrary or absolute authority or a libertarian conception of freedom as unrestrained will. Moreover, Hegel’s

emphasis on social freedom marks an important challenge to the individualist–contractualist tradition of rights—a challenge that was taken up in the aftermath of idealist philosophy and remains a powerful current in political thought.

Marx and the Frankfurt School

Shortly after Hegel’s death in 1831, Hegelian philosophy split between the conservative, theologically oriented Right Hegelians and the revolutionary, politically conscious Left Hegelians. Although a relative latecomer to the intellectual scene, the young Karl Marx energized this latter group of “Young Hegelians” with a novel (albeit highly polemical) theory of dialectical materialism that predicted the collapse of capitalism and the subsequent emergence of classless communist society as a historical necessity. Although Marx makes extensive use of Hegel’s dialectic method of critique, he is deeply critical of Hegel’s idealist philosophy. In place of the abstract, metaphysical notion of “spirit,” or *Geist*, Marx famously proposes to “set Hegel back on his feet,” to explain human activity in terms of its *material* basis, that is, through the concrete economic relations that arise from the essentially productive nature of human beings.

Inspired by Marx’s early writings, members of the Institute for Social Research, which came to prominence in Frankfurt in the 1930s, developed a “critical theory” that aimed not only at an explanation but also at the *emancipation* of modern capitalist society. Although they by no means spoke with a collective voice, the theorists of the “Frankfurt school,” including Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, and György Lukács, were engaged in a two-part strategy: to purge idealist metaphysics of theology, on the one hand, and on the other, to salvage the idealist claim that experience is historically and theoretically structured. This undertaking, they believed, would facilitate the union of theory and praxis absent in traditional theory. Its efforts were largely thwarted, however, by the rise of National Socialism, which forced many of its members into exile.

During the postwar period when “second-generation” critical theory arose, Jürgen Habermas assumed directorship of the Institute. Habermas’s early

political work combines the Marxist critique of political economy with pragmatist philosophy to formulate the concept of a “public sphere” where genuinely democratic social discourse could take place. Already, this optimism for nonideological communicative practices marks an important shift away from the more skeptical orientation of early critical theorists. In his later writings, Habermas goes further: He appeals to an Enlightenment-derived universal normative standard of an “ideal speech situation” in which members achieve political consensus. For many, though, this move from the historicist, contextualist rationality of Hegel to the transcendent, universalist rationality of Kant betrays the critical epistemological foundations of earlier Frankfurt school theorists.

Meanwhile, Axel Honneth, who has led the Institute since 2001, has made great strides in bringing Hegel back into the fold of mainstream social and political theory. In his most influential work, *The Struggle for Recognition*, Honneth integrates an in-depth analysis of the early Hegel’s account of the “master/slave” dialectic with the empirical psychology of George Herbert Mead to construct a critical theory of social conflict. Taking various experiences of disrespect and political disenfranchisement as a starting point, Honneth articulates the “moral grammar” of an inherently human interest in mutual recognition in the often conflicting spheres of emotional love, political rights, and the development of individual talents and capacities.

Theories of recognition have since merged with a broader consortium of political thinkers from the postmodernist, feminist, and multiculturalist traditions. Although this development has yielded a fruitful and relevant exchange among major contemporary intellectuals, including Charles Taylor, Nancy Fraser, and Kwame Anthony Appiah, other critics question whether Hegel’s account of recognition offers a viable principle of social normativity. It is not clear, for example, that every instance of social conflict can be diagnosed as a failure of recognition. As Raymond Geuss argues, a suicide bombing hardly results only from an act of *misrecognition*. Furthermore, a politics of recognition seems to risk essentializing or oversimplifying complex forms of subjectivity *to be recognized*; to recognize, for example, “the plight of homosexuals” can result in an equally alienating identity concept.

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See also [Fichte, Johann Gottlieb](#); [Frankfurt School](#); [Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich](#); [Kant, Immanuel](#); [Marx, Karl](#)

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Michael Freeden Michael Freeden

Ideology

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Ideology

An ideology is a set of ideas, beliefs, and values that aim at defending, changing, or criticizing the social arrangements of a society and its public policy plans. It does so by controlling public conceptions of social and political life and by generating public decisions for a collectivity. Those are, however, necessary but insufficient characterizations of ideology, which is both one of the most disputed and most important political concepts. It is suspended in particular between two semantic families. The one evaluates ideology as a pejorative phenomenon, an illusory and distorted way of processing social reality. On that view, ideology is either eliminable or is an unfortunate outcome of the human desire to dominate social thinking in order to assert class or institutional power over others. The other view offers an interpretative analysis of its features as an indispensable and central dimension of all political thinking, and one that is to be found in many variants.

Origins of the Term's Varied Meanings

The term *ideology* was coined by Antoine Destutt de Tracy at the end of the eighteenth century to refer to the scientific investigation of ideas, although it has since shifted to denoting those ideas themselves. Its introduction as a major analytical tool by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels established its derogatory signification on the epistemological level as an abstract inversion of reality and truth. They also associated ideology and class: The

alienated existence of human beings under capitalism formed partial thoughts that reflected the material power of the bourgeoisie and its relations of production. The power of ideology was augmented because its distortions were presented as normal features of socioeconomic life—an early recognition of the tendency of many ideologies to naturalize their preferences. Once those defects of social life would be removed, however, ideology would disappear and truth would reemerge. As the task of theory was to unmask, Marxist analysts originally showed little interest in the details of the distortion they wished to eradicate; hence, they referred to ideology in the singular.

The abstraction and distortion located in the Marxist conception of ideology were joined by another derogatory tendency: Under the impact of the interwar rise of communism and fascism, ideologies were now understood as titanic ideational weapons that attempted to pervade all walks of life in a unitary vision, and that were often in a state of violent confrontation. The semantic field thus thickened, associating ideology with dissimulation, oppression, ephemerality, totalism, and a high degree of abstraction, features that are still attributed to ideology in current vernacular usages. In addition, the mode of ideological expression was regarded as manipulative not only through a selective approach to facts but also through a direct appeal to emotion. That could occur both by means of rousing or subtle rhetoric and through visual means, one powerful instance being the Nazi Nuremberg rallies in the 1930s.

The next stage in evolving interpretations of ideology was linked to the important theoretical innovations of Karl Mannheim (1893–1947). Mannheim accepted the social rootedness of ideology, but he recognized its multiplicity of forms. He also drew attention both to its manipulative and its unconscious manifestations, and he distinguished between a particular and a total conception of ideology. The first, on the psychological level, included deceptions and lies. The second constituted a complete *Weltanschauung* adopted by a group that reflected the broad field of ideas prevailing in a given historical epoch. But Mannheim persisted in the unusual restriction of ideology to conservative and traditional social thought, while reserving the term *utopia* to what might now be regarded as progressive or transformative ideologies. Although Mannheim was crucial in advancing ideology as a

phenomenon that had to be taken seriously, ultimately he too continued to regard it in a normatively skeptical manner, suggesting that the intelligentsia—those able to cut loose from their socially conditioned thinking—could free-float among different ideological positions. In developing a perspective capable of transcending ideological determinism and offering a unified sociology of knowledge, they could return to some notion of social truth. What is often referred to as “Mannheim’s paradox”—that in exposing a view as ideological, we too offer an ideological view of the world—could thus seemingly be resolved.

Two other thinkers from the Marxist stable—Antonio Gramsci (1892–1937) and Louis Althusser (1918–90)—injected new life into ideology studies. Gramsci’s two major contributions were to introduce the notion of hegemony and to explore the real-world practice of ideological thinking. Ideological hegemony, in which a dominant ideology was imposed by a class, could be exercised not merely through state violence but also through cultural means, permeating social life and engendering consensus and ostensible universality. This hegemony could be the basis of a moral and intellectual order. Moreover, rejecting the Marxist depiction of ideology as metaphysical, Gramsci reintegrated philosophical thinking into normal human thought-practices. He distinguished between individual, professionally formulated philosophies, the hegemonic thinking of leading groups, and the faiths and fragmented insights of the masses, all of which combined to form ideological systems.

Althusser identified various repressive apparatuses such as the state, the church, and the military that ensured the ideological underpinning of the existing order and control over the workers. But he broke away from Marxist assumptions in acknowledging that ideology was itself a reality, penetrating all walks of life. It was a feature of human thought that people produced an imagined representation of their relation to the concrete world.

But another strand of considering ideologies was emerging in the social sciences, especially in the United States. Based on field research of attitude and opinion studies, political scientists were investigating empirical and cognitive belief-systems that could be subjected to statistical analysis, rather than as a pathological manifestation of defective thinking. This

behaviorist approach took ideology at face-value as a mixture of rational and emotional explanations for the daily acts and beliefs of the “common man and woman.” This understanding of ideology invested it with an apparently neutral aura, as a resource for generating shared purposes and crafting social visions; yet it was usually applied to the defense of democratic politics. This was partly a functionalist approach to ideology, and it extended that form of thought from ideologues and intellectuals to the population at large in a more decisive manner than suggested by Gramsci. Ideology was thus a grassroots and typical product of thinking, vernacular as well as professional, although bereft of the critical and power-wielding edge that the Marxist version of the concept had accrued. Ideology now seemed destined to stay as a permanent facet of thinking in and about society.

Nonetheless, one positivist, matter-of fact reformulation of ideology converged surprisingly with one of Marx’s and Engels’s conclusions: the anticipated withering away of ideology. But whereas for the Marxists the demise of ideology would be the consequence of negating alienation and rediscovering social truth, for the end-of-ideology prophets—whose voice was heard mainly in the 1950s—the increasing convergence of advanced industrial societies over material ends and lifestyles would render ideology superfluous. That ostensible empirical claim interpreted ideology solely as passionate and extreme political disagreement. Hence, it was blind to the scenario that ideological convergence would still have resulted in the existence of one ideology rather than none, and its apocalyptic macro-perspective typically confused overlap with consensus.

The Symbolic and Linguistic Turn in Approaching Ideology

The next major conceptual input into the comprehension of ideology came from social and cultural anthropologists such as Clifford Geertz, who viewed ideologies as symbolic arrangements that helped to simplify the complexities of social reality. Ideologies provided maps that made sense of social space by guiding their users through a social terrain. Without them, individuals and groups could not orient themselves or express important

aspects of their identity. In addition, such approaches regarded ideologies as renderings of social time: imagined histories of the past and the future through which one or more collective national identities could be fashioned.

The linguistic turn in the final third of the twentieth century had another significant impact on ideology studies. Through focusing on the properties of language and its interpretation, ideologies were now seen as having grammatical and structural properties. The ideas of which they consisted were mutually interdependent and appeared in specific sequences. If liberty was linked to property and security, it obtained a different meaning than when attached to equality and self-development. The emphasis could be transferred onto the microstructure of ideologies. Assisted by Ludwig Wittgenstein's notion of family resemblances, ideologies were now perceived as ranging from relatively coherent and tightly organized ideas and concepts to looser and more fluid conceptual relationships, whose membership was flexible and whose boundaries were vague. Thus, liberalism could shade into libertarianism, but also it could mutate into social democracy at its edges. The identification of many variants transformed the study of ideology into a nuanced examination of the structure and properties of its components that replaced cruder and more simplistic generalizations about ideology as such, or even about major ideologies—liberalism or conservatism—that had tended to single out one or two properties of each.

Recent studies of ideology, consequently, have shifted away from unmasking it to decoding it. On one dimension, employing hermeneutical insights, ideologies are consumed as well as produced. In their more formal manifestations, they are designed to elicit support and activity, but they are simultaneously subject to multiple interpretations that reduce the efficacy of their decontesting role. On another, Paul Ricoeur's phrase the "surplus of meaning" indicates the noncognitive and unintentional facets of political language, when the texts and speech-acts one formulates contain more meaning than intended by their producers. The identification of context serves as an aid to decoding ideologies, as even the same expression of ideas may carry diverse significations, depending on the context in which we choose to hear it. The right to property was at one time a radical cry to endow the socially marginalized and at another a defensive slogan voiced

by the well-to-do. When attached to the term *social*, property loses its individualistic, libertarian coloring, while linking it to *intellectual* endows it with a defense of human creativity and originality.

The association of ideology with power was not abandoned, though, as ideologies became increasingly understood as contestations over the control of political language. As the meanings attached to political words became a focal site of dispute, such insights were separately advanced in the philosophical field through W. B. Gallie's (1955–56) notion of essentially contested concepts, a standpoint maintaining that many concepts were incapable of accruing a precise meaning. Initially that argument referred to the impossibility of agreeing on the worth and ranking of the values embedded in political concepts. Later, a morphological analysis was added, according to which each political concept possessed more conceptions than could be articulated in any of its expressed forms. The choice of which conceptions of a concept to press into service was logically arbitrary but culturally significant: Would, for instance, equality refer to identical outcomes, to similar needs, or to leveling out opportunities? Ideologies were thus particular, decontested, combinations of concepts from among a potentially indeterminate pool of meanings those concepts could channel. This association of ideology with a response to the challenge of semantic indeterminacy combined the typical ideological drive to finality with the impossibility of securing it in a durable manner. Hegemony was replaced with ephemeral and mutating power. Ideologies were therefore polysemic thought-clusters that vied with each other over legitimating or delegitimizing competing semantic renderings of the social world and the practices that obtain within it.

The morphological decoding of ideologies extracts four salient features. Proximity draws attention to the interrelationship of the conceptual meanings that ideologies contain: Each concept within an ideology is crucially informed by the idea-environment in which it is located. Permeability identifies the intersecting of ideological positions, indicating that ideologies are by no means mutually exclusive in their substantive stances, nor are they separated by clear ideational boundaries. That is also true of the main political concepts, many of which contain within their domain other concepts that are at the same time analytically distinct:

Democracy comprises equality, which is a concept in its own right. Proportionality refers to the relative weight that the conceptual components of an ideology possess. Mostly, ideologies are to be distinguished not by the presence or absence of a concept, but by the importance and centrality attributed to it within one ideology in contrast to its downplaying in another.

Finally, priority emphasizes the major political role of ideologies as ranking devices for socially valued or urgent goods. In spatial terms, that is conveyed by the three-band structure of any ideology. It possess a core of ideas that changes slowly, a set of adjacent concepts that fleshes out the core in greater specificity, and a periphery of faster changing ideas and practices that relate to concrete circumstances. The various socialisms will all display the concepts of group, equality, and labor at their core; in adjacent positions, various forms of public ownership, democracy, or time will be bolted on, and colonialism, war, or immigration will serve as particular points of contact between socialism and the world of action. Notably, events on an ideological perimeter may work their way back and impact on adjacent concepts and even on its core. Significantly, an ideological core does not imply an essentialist view of ideology but a statement about the empirically determinable longevity of its central ideational underpinnings.

Post-Marxists, too, such as Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, have emphasized the contingency of discourse and the articulatory role of ideology, holding disparate elements together, forming a (transitory) social identity, redefining the individual subject, and bestowing on society a discursive and symbolic unity to counterbalance its internal dislocations and antagonisms, while for Slavoj Žižek, ideologies are fantasmic substitutes for an unfathomable void: the lack of the real world. Discourse analysts have resurrected the critical approach to ideology by harnessing ideology to power practices that either legitimate domination or generate conflict.

Conclusion

Unlike most initial views of ideologies—replicated even by Mannheim—that saw them as preserving and enforcing the social order, the concept now covers various forms of dissent and contention. Some ideologies are

themselves revolutionary in character, such as types of socialism; or pursue strongly antiestablishment politics, such as types of anarchism. Unlike early and mid-twentieth-century views of ideologies as locked in an epic struggle—as liberal-democracy, communism, and fascism were believed to be—societies are now understood to contain a plurality of ideologies, and each may contain supportive and critical elements in different measures. Green ideologies, for instance, are notable for combining radical reform with a great affinity toward caution and conservation.

Ideologies do not merely appear in textual or spoken forms; they may also convey their messages through physical practices such as demonstrations or parades. Much of their impact is visual: in monumental architecture, in art and posters, in ceremonies and rituals, in city layouts and public statuary, and in shrines and road names. Some is aural, through commemorative silences or national anthems.

The pejorative approach to ideology has obscured some of its vital contributions to social life. Ideologies are crucial political resources in mobilizing influence that enables and empowers groups and individuals. They perform a major role in initiating, testing, and reconfiguring the imaginative creativity without which the options for social futures cannot emerge. They assist in translating ideational complexity into communicable terms. As typical forms of political thinking, they are an integral feature of the political world.

Michael Freeden

See also [Althusser, Louis](#); [Communism, Varieties of](#); [Conservatism](#); [Fascism](#); [Gramsci, Antonio](#); [Laclau, Ernesto](#); [Liberalism](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [National Socialism](#); [Neoconservatism](#); [Neoliberalism](#); [Psychoanalysis and Political Thought](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#)

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Indian Political Thought

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Indian Political Thought

India has a distinctive tradition of modern political thought dating back to the late eighteenth century. The first modern thinker of India, Ram Mohun Roy (1772–1832), laid the foundation of the tradition in a synthetic manner by defending many modern Western modes of thinking such as rationalism and reason, as well as ideas such as liberty and liberalism (albeit in a limited way), without delivering a fullblown attack on a traditional social order in India that was based on different paradigms of thought. In other words, Indian thinkers since Roy, including Mahatma Gandhi, have had to grapple with India's pre-British political thought, which was rich and diverse, often synthetic in nature, and powerful (Bhaduri 1998; Ghosal [1886] 1959). Modern

Indian political thought is based on India's ancient civilization and its capacity for accommodation of various foreign elements and ideas brought in by successive foreign political invasions. This has served to give complexity and variety to Indian political thinking as well as some uniqueness (Bhattacharyya and Ghosh 2007).

To be sure, India's modern political thinkers, except a few, were not systematic political philosophers such as John Locke, Thomas Hill Green, and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel; rather, modern India's political thinkers were at the same time social and political activists engaged in reforming their old society by engaging in political dialogues with the British colonial rule or acting against it. The leader-intellectuals of modern

Indian politics were many, and their thoughts varied enormously too. After Ram Mohun Roy, the most prominent among them were Bankim Chandra Chattaopadhyaya, Rabindra Nath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda, Ramtirth, Surendra Nath Banerjea, Sri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi, V. D. Savarkar, K. B. Hedgewar, Jawaharlal Nehru, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, M. N. Roy, Jay Prakash Narayan, and Ram Manohar Lohia.

The changing and challenging social and political context surrounding these leaders meant that there were often inconsistencies in what they thought socially and politically. To give but two examples from Ram Mohun Roy: As a social reformer engaged in the movement for abolition of the practice of *sati* (burning of widows on the funeral pyres of their husbands), Roy had to resort to India's old scriptural traditions of thought to make his argument. And his defense of liberalism in India did not seem (to him) to clash with his defense of Indian feudalism and British colonialism (Pantham 1986b, 32–52). However, the issue of social reform remained a *sine qua non* of modern Indian political thought, and from the so-called Bengal Renaissance (a cultural and literary movement for reform of Hindu social practices and modes of thought starting in the early nineteenth century) onward (Kaviraj 1984; Sarkar 1970), a contentious question in Indian political thought and movements.

For example, as Indian nationalism became more defensive and conservative with the arrival of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (popularly known as Mahatma Gandhi, and the “Father of the Nation”) in India's freedom movement from the early twentieth century, social reform in favor of a modern society almost disappeared from the political vision, and often degenerated into so-called village reconstruction, a program that did not contain any radical reform of the hierarchical social order and its accompanying social inequalities and discrimination. Among other activities, village reconstruction entailed the homespun cloth, or *khadi*, and production by manual labor. Scholars have debated Mahatma Gandhi's uncritical defense of the country's traditional Hindu social order, in which he appealed to a higher philosophical ground as part of his trenchant critique of Western civilization. Gandhi's philosophical defense was rooted in ideals of *satyagraha* (truthful action), *dharma* (in Hinduism, religious and moral law governing conduct), and nonviolence derived from the

ancient Hindu and Buddhist thought of India. The implications of this critique for the politics of anticolonial nationalism have also been controversial. While Gandhi was not ready to concede any ground to Western values (or, for that matter, Western civilization as such), most brands of anticolonial nationalist thought were preoccupied with defining the critical space for the coexistence of both Indian values and Western values in India. This is illustrated, among others, in the thought of Ram Mohun Roy, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Rabindra Nath Tagore, and Jawaharlal Nehru. Tagore, for instance, criticized Gandhi's attribution of the earthquake in Bihar to the curse of the caste system rather than to scientific causes (Bhattacharyya 1997, 158–59; Chatterjee 1986, 1993; Pantham 1986a; Parekh 1989).

Another distinctive feature of modern Indian political thought is its derivative character evident in its mode of thinking, reasoning, and logic, as well as the substantive content of the thought in varied forms and manners such as nationalism, self-determination, statehood, identity, democracy, liberty and freedom, civil and human rights, socialism and communism, civil society, associations and political parties, movements, government, and so on. As Chatterjee (1986) argued, the post-Enlightenment European framework of thought dominated thinking on Indian nationalism, its relation to power, and the need for state power: “formulation of our problem in which our nationalist thought appears to oppose the dominating implications of post-Enlightenment European thought at one level and yet, at the same time, seems to accept that domination at another” (Chatterjee 1986, 37). Its derivative character, however, is not to be seen as its weakness. In many respects, the originality of the thought itself was in fact proved, especially in critiques of European modernity, which remain a running thread in the writing of many social and political thinkers of modern India. Bhudev Mukhopadhyay (1827–94), a relatively less known nineteenth-century Bengal Renaissance thinker with profound originality and insights, formulated a theory of nationhood for India grounded in a basic multiethnic unity (an inclusive theory of Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and aboriginal people) at a time when the Bengal Renaissance movement as a whole had problems with the toleration of Muslims (Bhattacharyya 2007a, 30–45; Bhattacharyya 2010, 48–61).

For a long time after India's independence, a kind of uncritical functionalism and cynicism stood in the way of a true understanding of the distinctive character and originality of modern Indian political thought. Angadipuram Appadurai (1971), in one of the earliest attempts to approach Indian political thought, had its central question thus formulated:

Was there any political thinking in the India of those days?—dependent upon foreign rule, economically poor, and widespread illiterate as she was. Any conception of the State and of the relationship between the State and the individual, of the authority of the State and rights of the citizens and related ideas—liberty, equality, the rule of law, democracy, socialism and nationalism—are usually preceded by a developed civic life, which India did not possess. This question must be broadly answered in the negative in this respect. (Bhattacharyya 2007b, x)

Bereft of the context, that was a wrong way of putting the question. Modern Indian political thought took shape in symbiotic relation between movement and thought or ideas. India's modern thinkers were leaders of social reform and political change. Although some of these thinkers focused on social reform and incremental political change (expressed in such terms as “self-government within the British Empire”), there also were systematic and sophisticated treatises on equality, including Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's *Samya* (Ganguly 1975) and Indian Nobel Laureate writer Rabindra Nath Tagore's extensive tract on nationhood (Chatterjee 1993, 67–103). Tagore was critical of the Indian National Congress (INC)—led anticolonial nationalist mobilizations and the dangers of state-centric nationalism to which the INC was committed, while appealing to the people to take charge of the country. As Tagore wrote:

In those days, begging with reddened eyes and threatening the Government with a harsh voice and the fear of the bugbear were considered to be heroic. Today's youth will not understand the unreality of that political exercise. The whole appeal of that politics was to the authorities, not to the people. For that reason, lecturing in

English in the Provincial Conferences and Village Assemblies was taken to be natural by almost everybody. (Bhattacharyya 2007b, xi)

Tagore developed a critique of state-centricity, characteristic of Western civilization, and the political theory that emerged out of it. Distinguishing between this *rashtratantra* (rule of the state) and *samajtantra* (rule of the society), as prevalent in India and China, he argued that in the case of the former, the decline of the state (as a result of war, for example) had meant the decline of the society, as in the case of ancient Greece and Rome. But China and India, he says, have been able to maintain themselves in the face of changes in the state because their trust was widespread over society (Bhattacharyya 2007b, xi).

Strands of Nationalist Thinking

In the analysis of modern Indian political thought, distinctions are often made among different phases, or strands of thought, by nationalist leaders on how India's society should operate after the ouster of British colonialism. These strands include liberal, extremist, conservative, communalist (Hindu and Muslim variety), socialist, and communist. Such strands were connected with the forces engaged in anticolonial movements for India's liberation. In pure theoretical terms, the so-called liberal, or socialist and communist, strands of thought were adapted in complex ways to Indian conditions. For example, certain movements and parties imagined nationhood in Hindu and Muslim communal terms, taking religious identity as the basis for national identity. There were alternative visions of nationhood that sought to construct a nation out of diversity and through diversity, as a pluralist, composite category cutting across caste, class, religion, and tribal ethnicity. This is typified most notably in the writings of Bhudev Mukhopadhyay, Rabindra Nath Tagore, and Jawaharlal Nehru.

For a colonial people who had long existed as an old civilization prior to colonialism, shaking off an alien rule was the most important task. Hence, an anticolonial nationalism, constructed differently at different hands and at different times, remained the cornerstone of modern Indian political thought. Partha Chatterjee considered Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay

(1834–94) one of the “first systematic expounders of the principles of nationalism” (Chatterjee 1986, 54), but he pointed out, in great detail, the derivative nature of Bankim’s project in that Bankim argued within the post-Enlightenment framework of knowledge produced by Europe. Ranajit Guha (2010), however, would argue that the real precursor of Indian nationalism was Ram Mohun Roy, who had articulated a notion of *swade-shikata* (patriotism), which found its political reincarnation in Bankim (pp. 90–91): In Ram Mohun Roy’s writing, fame, modernity, social reform, and nationalism were mutually interconnected (p. 90).

A distinct socialist stream of thought also took shape in India from the early twentieth century not as a coherent system of thought, but as a body of ideas organically linked to India’s national liberation movements and intended to strengthen the base of the movements. Such socialist ideas were designed basically to provide a theory of emancipation of agricultural workers. Acharya Narendra Deva’s (1889–1956) *Socialism and the National Revolution* (1946), for instance, does not reject the theory of class struggle and appeals to nationalist values (Varma 1961, 20–21). With no sympathy for reformism and constitutionalism, as prevalent in the nationalist movements in India, Deva thought that the only way to mobilize mass action and to make India ripe for democracy was to socialize the nationalist movement by adopting an economic ideology for the masses (p. 671). He advocated that the socialists join the nationalist movements. Jay Praksh Narayan (1910–79) was known as the exponent of total revolution. But his version of socialism, like Deva’s, was inextricably linked to India’s national liberation movement. Narayan argued for the Marxist emphasis on the economic foundation of politics, and he drew attention to abysmal economic exploitation of the Indian masses during British rule, both by the colonial rulers and by feudal landlords. For him, socialism was a theory of social and economic reconstruction of society, but one rooted in the indigenous culture. His socialism included emphasized widespread planning and technological reconstruction of all aspects of society —“harmonious and well-balanced growth of the whole of society.” (Narayan 1946, 88)

Within the broad socialist and leftist tradition, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose (1897–c. 1945) would be considered profoundly radical in terms of methods

of struggle for India's liberation and the reconstruction of post-liberation India, which were at variance with many of his seniors and contemporaries. A great patriot and desperate for the liberation of his country, he became allied with the Nazis and the fascists for their help in his militant struggle against British imperialism. He was strongly influenced by Vedantic thought and the thinking of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo (two great cultural and spiritual nationalist thinkers of modern India), and he was highly critical of Gandhism (despite his great admiration for Mahatma Gandhi, whom he called "the Father of Our Nation" in 1944). His socialism consisted of combining the social and political struggle of the masses, resolute anti-imperialism, and socialism without class struggle. In his famous book, *The Indian Struggle* (first published in 1944), he said:

The logic of history will, therefore, follow its inevitable course. The political struggle and the social struggle will have to be conducted simultaneously. The party that will win political freedom for India will win social and economic freedom for the masses. (Bose 1997, 413–14)

In his more programmatic thinking and plan of action, he advanced the hypothesis that in the future in India, the state would function as an instrument of the masses, especially of the peasants, a new political party with military-like discipline (replacing the Indian National Congress) would look after the interests of the workers, peasants, etc.; stand for complete political and economic liberation of the country; a federal government with dictatorial powers for some time; state-planning; equality for all individuals; cultural autonomy for individual ethnic groups; and so on.

Jawaharlal Nehru (1889–1964), a nationalist leader-thinker and state-builder, espoused a particularly distinctive blend of ideas that combined liberalism, nationalism, and socialism rooted in rationality, science and reason, and the specific Indian conditions. As a socialist, Nehru believed in state planning but did not advocate class struggle and violence as a method of social transformation, preferring democratic peaceful transition to socialism. For him, there was no quarrel between democracy and socialism, and a rigid ideological position was to be abjured. As a nationalist thinker, his theory of nationhood belonged to the "third wave" of nationalism,

which, from the late nineteenth century, advocated that diversity was not a problem but an asset in building nations. His acute sensitivity to India's cultural diversity while promoting unity was symptomatic of such an approach. Finally, secularism was another pillar of Nehru's political thought. For Nehru, it was a social ideal to be promoted for the sake of national unity and progress. His version of secularism was that the state shall observe neutrality in regard to all religions and that religion had no place in democratic politics.

The communists in India envisioned a more radical nationhood for the India of the future. And yet, the communist movements that developed in India in different regions in different times mostly thrived on ethno-regional moorings. However, the communist traditions of thought themselves were varied and changed over time, too. M. N. Roy (1887–1954), a communist thinker of modern India and prolific writer, later turned critical and radical-humanist, who participated in the Comintern debates in the early 1920s on the question of liberation of the colonies with Lenin, and advanced an alternative thesis to that of Lenin (Datta Gupta 2006), was a complex case himself. Commentators like Sudipta Kaviraj (1986, 209–36), for example, found a philosophical continuity between the so-called two phases of Roy, namely, communist and radical-humanist, rooted in his attempts to combine nationalism and radicalism. Roy was perhaps the first to make an ambitious attempt to understand Indian society from a Marxist angle in his “An Indian Communist Manifesto,” published in an obscure Scottish labor journal, but the analysis was not well grounded at all (Kaviraj 1986, 215–16). But in the famous Comintern debate in 1920, Roy, in arguing with Lenin, made an international impact although the Comintern accepted Lenin's thesis that defended communist cooperation with the bourgeoisie in the colonies in their struggle against colonialism. Events in national liberation movements in the colonies such as the withdrawal of noncooperation movement by Mahatma Gandhi in India, and the near total annihilation of the communists in China by the Kuomintang seemed to vindicate Roy's position more than Lenin's. Roy, a virulent critic of Mahatma Gandhi's politics of nonviolence (*ahimsa*) and *satyagraha* (truthful action), himself moved during 1940–47 to radicalism, and then to new integral scientific humanism during 1947–54. His new humanism was centered on the “axiological worth of moral and spiritual freedom, reason and ethics, while freedom, reason and morality

constituted the valuational elements of his Integral Humanism” (Varma 1961, 650).

Gandhi’s Ideas and the Response

In the domain of modern Indian political thought, the ideas of Gandhi are most difficult to analyze and often enigmatic. For one, he was not a systematic political philosopher in the sense we understand the term. His ideas developed out of his varied experiences, or “experiments” in public life. To begin with, his critique of Western civilization and its institutions early on in his political career indicated that little space would be available in his framework of thought to theorize about the state, individual freedom, or an institutional blueprint for future India. He is well known for a few techniques of political struggle and resistance such as *satyagraha* and *ahimsa*, which proved enduring. Unlike Tagore or Nehru, Gandhi was in favor of (re)mixing religion with politics, for he believed they were inseparable, on ethical planes. In his *Hind Swaraj*, he wrote:

Your argument tends to show that there must be a complete divorce between politics and religion or spirituality. This is what we see in everyday life under modern conditions. Passive resistance seeks to rejoin politics and religion and to test any one of our sections in the light of ethical principles. (Rothermund 1986, 297)

However, Gandhi provided a prescriptive democratic solution to the problem of violence in Indian society. This consisted in reorganizing village-based panchayats (village councils) along nonviolent lines. For Gandhi, violence meant exploitation, which means denial of the moral integrity of humans. An analysis of violence and nonviolence, therefore, comprised a large part of Gandhi’s social and political thought. Commentators on Gandhi’s thought have also appreciated his concept of dialogue as a way of discovering truth and have seen his emphasis on the need for tolerance in as a civic virtue essential to democracy (Terchek 1986, 312). Gandhi’s understanding of the relation between the individual and the government of the day smacked of originality of thought:

[M]ost people do not understand the complicated machinery of the government. They do not realize every citizen silently but nonetheless certainly sustain the government of the day in ways of which he has no knowledge. Every citizen therefore renders himself responsible for every act of his government. And it is quite proper to support it so long as the actions of the government are bearable. But when they hurt him and his nation it becomes his duty to withdraw his support. (Terchek 1986, 315)

Thomas Pantham has made a strong case in defending Mahatma Gandhi's powerful alternative to our known world of the ideas, practices, and institutions of liberal democracy—one that especially suited India (Pantham 1986a, 325–47).

A description of modern Indian political thought remains incomplete without reference to a distinct body of ideas advanced since the nineteenth century in favor of social justice, an end to social discrimination, and political empowerment of the members of the lower caste (formerly “untouchables”), who were and still are numerous and who suffered for centuries at the hands of higher caste people in the Hindu caste hierarchy. Although rooted in the social movements and ideas of Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, and E. V. Ramaswamy Naicker (Periyar), such ideas found their most articulate expression going back to the days of British colonial rule, but most prominently since the 1930s, in the writings and activities of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar (1891–1956) who was known as the leader of India's “untouchables” and the father of the Indian constitution. Ambedkar's ideas and approach were at once critical of Gandhi's approach toward the lower castes (Gandhi called them *Harijans*, or “the children of God”), and of Hinduism and its scriptural prescriptions. Ambedkar's ideas were grounded in modernity: industrialization, state ownership (Zelliot 1986, 166), pluralism, equality of consideration, respect and dignity, constitutional democracy, identity, and civil society (Rodrigues 2002, 1–45). More than anybody else, Ambedkar's defense of social justice for the lower castes (now referred to as *dalits*) has since India's independence produced perhaps the most powerful impact in setting the agenda of Indian politics.

Harihar Bhattacharyya

See also [Equality and Egalitarianism](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Nationalism](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Socialism](#)

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Indigenous Political Thought

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Indigenous Political Thought

Indigenous political thought is ancient, and it has profoundly shaped global politics, economics, culture, and science for centuries. As a result of what Antony Anghie describes as the “civilizing mission, the grand project that has justified colonialism as a means of redeeming the backward . . . people of the non-European world by incorporating them into the universal civilization of Europe” (Anghie 2004, 3), indigenous thought has largely, until recently, been erased, ignored, or marginalized in Western discourse. As with most global surveys of a particular category, it is impossible to synopsise “indigenous political thought” without overgeneralization or simplification of complex traditions. There are, however, some common threads that can generally be found between and across indigenous peoples’ perspectives.

Some of these common threads are reflected in the ways in which indigenous peoples were compelled to interact with colonizing/settler state powers. Indigenous peoples engaged in their own brand of international relations prior to the arrival of Europeans, and that international diplomatic tradition was brought to bear in political relations with the newcomers. Following those practices, indigenous peoples continuously asserted their political, legal, economic, cultural, and spiritual perspectives in relations with the nonindigenous world—whether through trade, treaty negotiations, political compromises, or conflict. Between 1882 and 1925, indigenous peoples sent at least seven delegations, just from North America, New Zealand, or Australia, into the international legal and political arena for

negotiations. During that same period, indigenous peoples from other parts of the world (Hawai'i, India, Panama) engaged in independent international relations (Wilmer 1993, 127–28). National self-determination is a core concept of indigenous political thought.

The emergence of the global “indigenous voice” since the 1960s has resulted in a projection into the global state system of a number of theories, ideas, and practices that, among other things, call into question the legitimacy of the state as a model for political organization, that question European-rooted economic strategies whether capitalist or Marxist, that challenge contemporary notions of modernity and development, and that champion egalitarianism and environmental sustainability as fundamental to enduring political frameworks (Barriero 2011; Manuel and Polsuns 1974; Means 1995).

Because of colonizing processes that demeaned, and sought to eradicate, indigenous political and cultural structures, most conventional political scientists are unaware of indigenous histories in this realm. The intellectual void that was created by racist policies such as Manifest Destiny was often filled by deep cultural stereotypes of indigenous politics embodied in the dictatorial “Big Chief,” who, according to the stereotypes, lorded over primitive, brutal, sexist societies. On the contrary, many indigenous societies in the Americas were matrilineal/matrilocal, possessed a positive view of human nature, practiced broad respect for individual liberty and engaged political participation (often through consensus), respected gender and age equity/equality, engaged in periodic redistribution of wealth, and reflected a symbiotic relationship between humans and the total environment. As noted by scholars including Donald Grinde and Bruce Johansen (1991), Andrea Bear-Nicholas, James C. Scott (2009), and Pierre Clastres (1987), most indigenous political societies were highly decentralized and eschewed coercion as a means of achieving respect for and adherence to political decisions. None of this history is to suggest a romanticized notion of indigenous political thought, or to imply there were not deviations from the core values mentioned above. Rather, it contends that scholarly concentration on the exceptions has served to blind political and social science to the essence of indigenous political philosophy and practice.

The quasi-anarchistic, egalitarian, and collective nature of indigenous political economy was especially vexing to European invaders in their colonizing projects. Christopher Columbus, for instance, wrote, “[the Indians] are the best people in the world and the most peaceable” (Letter from Columbus, December 16, 1492, quoted in Todorov 1984, 36), and Bartolomé Las Casas judged that “[the Indians] wisely administered the affairs of both peace and war justly and equitably, truly governed by laws that at very many points surpass ours, and could have won the admiration of the sages of Athens” (Las Casas 1975, 43). More than 150 years later, in Canada, Jesuit missionary Jerome Lalemont reported (1648): “I do not believe there is any people on earth freer than they, and less willing to allow the subjugation of their wills to any power whatever”—a condition that Lalemont derided as “the wicked liberty of the savages.” It was precisely the freedom, generosity, and egalitarianism of indigenous societies that had to be destroyed to coerce them into becoming good colonized subjects (Greer 2000, 36; Leacock 1983, 22–23; Scott 2009, 98–126).

Despite the devastating impacts of colonialism on indigenous societies, a vibrant and dynamic international indigenous peoples’ resurgence occurred in the late twentieth century. As discussed by Deloria (1974), the Akwesasne Notes (1978), and Bruyneel (2007), this movement revived and advanced key concepts of indigenous political thought, including egalitarianism, environmental respect and sustainability, and the need for alternative political and economic approaches beyond the neoliberal state model. Indigenous political thought also included an important extension of conventional decolonization theory, beyond Frantz Fanon and Albert Memmi, in which indigenous peoples’ condition under settler-state colonialism was specifically addressed (Alfred 1999, 2005; Grounds, Tinker, and Wilkins 2003). Indigenous peoples’ decolonization theory, while intimately connected to other critiques of the state such as feminism and postcolonial studies, offers its own unique critique and strategies for the future (Green 2000; Mander 2006; Stewart-Harawira 2007). Anaya (2009) and Venne (1998) have described the ways in which indigenous political thought has served as a catalyst for the development of new and expansive notions of international human-rights norms, resulting in, among other developments, the adoption of International Labor Organization Convention 169 (1989), the United Nations (UN) Declaration on the Rights of

Indigenous Peoples (2007), and the creation of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

Ongoing areas of intellectual development in indigenous political thought revolve around the intellectual property rights of indigenous peoples vis-à-vis globalized state/corporate interests (Harry 2003); a reexamination of the policies and legal doctrines justifying the colonization of indigenous peoples' territories under the theories of discovery, terra nullius, and conquest (Miller et al. 2010; Newcomb 2008); the international status of treaties between indigenous nations and colonial/settler-states (Alfonso-Martinez 1999); and indigenous prescriptions for environmental respect and sustainability (Morales n.d.; World Peoples Conference n.d.).

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See also [International Law](#); [International Relations Theory and Political Thought](#); [Rights, Civil](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#)

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Individualism

Individualism

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Individualism

Individualism is a complex idea with multiple connotations. A political definition might be “the doctrine that the rights and welfare of individual persons take precedence over the welfare of society at large,” although this generalization is subject to qualifications. Individualism is opposed to collectivism, an assortment of ideologies that differ greatly from one another but agree that the individual’s needs are secondary to the state’s. In Western political thought, the term has been in use for less than two centuries; before that, virtually everyone found his or her identity in terms of one or more communities. The idea that the individual human has inherent value apart from the community derives primarily from the Enlightenment but also has roots in the Protestant Reformation, industrialization, medieval scholasticism, and even in some ancient philosophers such as Epicurus.

Most philosophers agree that individualism includes certain key features: Each of us has intrinsic worth; we have a right to be guided by our consciences rather than by exterior forces; and we have a right to privacy and a right to realize our potential—“the pursuit of happiness,” as Thomas Jefferson said. In the political sense, these ideas were best expressed by John Stuart Mill, contending that government has no right to prevent us from doing, saying, or thinking anything whatsoever, as long as we do no serious harm to the rights of others, including others’ rights to thought, expression, and action.

During the nineteenth century, “individualism” was often used in a negative sense. Romantic philosophers condemned it as egoistic, leading to the fragmentation of civilized society; and the evolving “isms” were ambiguous about it. An exchange of ideas among French and British Enlightenment thinkers, including Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, led to social contract theory: The individual is sovereign, but an orderly society requires that each of us give up some rights to a government that agrees to protect our remaining rights in exchange for our cooperation.

But which rights do we surrender? A society in which sovereign individuals voluntarily place themselves under authority can range from a participatory democracy like that envisioned by Rousseau or the anarchists at one extreme, to a Hobbesian dictatorship in which a supreme leader expresses the will of the people, or claims that he does, at the other. On some questions those at the extremes agree: For instance, left libertarians (anarchists) and right libertarians (free-market conservatives) both oppose governmental intervention in the private lives of individuals. At the same time, they disagree on such questions as whether corporations have “individual rights” or who “owns” natural resources. In Western thought, individualism is often associated with laissez-faire capitalism: that is, government involvement in the economic activities of individuals should be minimized.

On a more abstract level, philosophers debate whether the behavior of human societies—states, voluntary organizations, religious groups, and so on—can be understood holistically, or must be explained in terms of the conduct and aspirations of each individual in the community.

Methodological individualism argues the latter: Groups are not greater than the sum of their parts, and they can be understood only by analyzing the motives and situations of their members. Others argue that groups have their own dynamic or personality, often citing Nazi Germany’s obedience to Adolf Hitler as the archetype. This view, sometimes called methodological holism, insists that groups do comply with laws that cannot be reduced, even in principle, to the level of the individual. Many philosophers have sought a middle ground, claiming that the ideal individual is one in whom personal freedom and potential are expressed in service to the community as a whole.

Finally, different cultures define the “individual” in different ways, and some radical and postmodern Western philosophers challenge the idea itself. Deep ecology, for example, asserts that because we all exchange matter and energy constantly with our environment, the boundaries of the individual person are arbitrary, and that in fact we are all part of one global “individual,” the biosphere. Gilles Deleuze defines the individual as the nexus of countless desires, blurring the traditional distinction between individualism and collectivism—a trend that will no doubt influence political philosophy in the future.

Thomas Martin

See also [Anarchism](#); [Communism](#), [Varieties of](#); [Community](#); [Conservatism](#); [Human Nature](#), [Theories of](#); [Liberalism](#); [Libertarianism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Dustin Garlitz Dustin Garlitz

Interests, Theories of

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Interests, Theories of

Subjective accounts of interests in modern political thought take into consideration feelings or attitudes, and theories that incorporate the latter tend to account for sharing by groups of people. Subjective theories of interests also account for claims or demands, and wants. German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's discussion of Roman law in his 1821 work *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, for example, dwells on the adjudication of interests prior to the term "interest" being linked to monetary affairs. From this area of Hegelian political thought, interests represented an unavoidable starting point in the comprehending of modern subjectivity and self-identity.

In the works of such diverse thinkers as David Hume, Jeremy Bentham, Adam Smith, James Madison, Condorcet, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, interests and interested behavior were presumed to account for a tacit dimension of human affairs. Hume argued that government for the most part relies on the natural basis of the interests of the governed. From Hume forward, many utilitarian thinkers were characterized as arguing that all moral rules are in fact built up out of generalizations from judgments about various types of interests. Bentham almost always referred to "interest" in the singular rather than the plural, holding that any interest that directs individuals or communities, or that is most ordinarily represented in the form of self-interest or public interest, is itself already an aggregate of commensurable goods. It is also in this utilitarian context that objective accounts of interests are thought of as changes that affect one

advantageously or disadvantageously, as means to satisfying wants, and what is conducive to happiness.

Edmund Burke regarded interests as essential to the smooth operation of social and political processes. It followed that interests were to be properly pursued by those responsible for the well-being of that society regardless of the feelings and attitudes of individual members. Burke did agree with Bentham that the service of interests was a proper objective of moral and political life. However, he disagreed substantially with his understanding of what would count as achieving the objective, notably in rejecting Bentham's account of public interest as an aggregation of individual interest. A later departure from Bentham's account was the twentieth-century moral and political philosopher John Rawls, who rejected the classical form of utilitarianism and its account of interested behavior. Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* (1971) attempted to convey the contemporary significance of interpreting and perceiving groups of interests as values or subjective goals.

Nineteenth-century German social and political thought intersected with the discourses of law and jurisprudence in the emergence of a movement known as *Interessenjurisprudenz*, which treated interest in the broadest possible sense. Jeremy Bentham's *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789) was particularly important in the development of this tradition of legal theory and its relation to modern political thought. The main thesis of *Interessenjurisprudenz* is that legal rules are the result of the clash of different interests represented in a given society, and in the public-political sphere, the conflict is solved either by compromise or by one group forcing the other to recognize its interests to the effect that these interests prevail and a legal framework is conceptually constructed to protect them. Along with *Interessenjurisprudenz* came a theory of types of interests, which often appeared in a living society and the workings of its public-political sphere, not just as a mechanism employed in political and legal theory construction. Bentham's relation to *Interessenjurisprudenz* is found in its distinguishing different types of interests. To a certain extent, it is paralleled by Bentham's effort to find criteria for the different interests. A very different German account of interests was provided by Karl Marx, for whom interests arose out of the

classes that emerged from the dominant mode of production in any society. In capitalism, the chief interests represented in politics were those of the bourgeoisie. But Marx hoped the increasingly organized proletariat would come to perceive its interest as the ultimate overthrow of capitalism and its replacement by communism.

Another later German account of interest was provided in Max Weber's juxtaposition of "ideal interests" with "material interests," both of which, Weber contended, directly governed human conduct. The concept of national interests emerged as a leading theme in this area of his scholarship. Developed from this topic was a distinction between interest-parties and what would become to known as Weltanschauung parties, governed by ideology, belief, and worldview.

Normative descriptions of interests account for more than actual desires. Such descriptions presuppose that persons or groups may be mistaken about their interests. Accordingly, if one wanted to determine his or her correct interests, an attempt must have been made to find out which goals he or she considered more important than others, by virtue of his or her standards. In the normative theories, such persons or groups are taken to be pursuing their interests correctly and therefore not mistaking them, provided they are rationally promoting their own welfare, as they see it, and it is irrelevant whether their purposes agree with my standards or with some supposedly objective moral norms. It is in such a setting that twentieth-century liberal American social and political thought tended to critique and characterize nineteenth-century concepts like Marxian false consciousness as a lack of awareness of one's objective interests. Following in this tradition, recent normative theories of interests represent a type of goal-oriented shift, one in which the resulting reconfiguration renders interests as based on those intrinsic preferences that one should adopt.

Dustin Garlitz

See also [Bentham, Jeremy](#); [Burke, Edmund](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [German Political Thought](#); [Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich](#); [Law and Political Thought](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Rawls, John](#); [Utilitarianism](#); [Weber, Max](#)

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International Law

International law

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International Law

Although the origins of international law can be found in earliest times (Roman city-states), modern international law is regarded as relatively young, some 400 years old. The Dutch scholar Hugo Grotius is acknowledged as the father of international law, although the term was initially coined by Jeremy Bentham. International law is frequently denied the status of law, being characterized, at best, as international morality. It is true that if employing John Austin's definition—that is, rules emanating from a central authority that, if broken, carry a sanction—international law will fail the test. However, Austin uses a rigid definition of law, and much of domestic law would likewise fail, as it does not accommodate case law.

International law was not born out of altruism but of necessity: States had to find ways to coexist. It is perhaps through this acknowledgment that a definition of international law is best reached; that is, as that body of rules and norms that govern relations states have between themselves and with other entities. States were the original, and are still the primary, actors in international law. However, the international legal system has increasingly had to take account of nonstate entities, such as international and nongovernmental organizations, national liberation movements, and to a certain extent, individuals. Such entities are not static and may change over time.

The international legal system is premised on the basis of equality of states, but obviously certain states carry more political weight than others.

Although every state theoretically enjoys the same degree of international personality, this is not true for organizations. The extent of an organization's personality will depend on the terms of its constituent document and may be either expressed or implied, as well as the relevant practice of the organization in question. Similarly, the degree of recognition on the international plane to which individuals are entitled is derivative.

Early international law dealt with concepts such as the freedom of the high seas, gaining momentum during the sixteenth-century "age of discovery," which necessitated rules for the establishment of a valid title to territory and the creation of a superior title over disputed territories. During this period, states began to engage more with each other, establishing parameters of activity, and hence, international law is founded on reciprocity and mutual respect.

Historically, the international legal system was not truly international but a reflection of Western European powers. The founding of the United Nations (UN) in 1946 could be seen as symbolic of this Western club of like-minded states. Although international law became more international geographically, in terms of content, it remained Eurocentric, until the 1960s and demands for political independence, particularly in the context of decolonization and self-determination. This was accompanied by a challenge to the content of international law but not to international law per se. Established rules were adapted to meet the demands of new members of the international community. The UN has since grown from 51 original members to 193.

Traditionally, a state's treatment of its own nationals was regarded as a matter for that state alone. However, in the wake of World War II, this changed. In 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted and further elaboration of the rights contained therein resulted in two legally binding treaties, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966). The possibility for an individual to bring a claim against his or her own state of nationality, as contained within these covenants, was novel and contentious, opening up states' legislation and practices to external review. However, the right of individual petition remains

dependent on a state's willingness to accord such a right. The growth of universal human rights has precipitated debates regarding cultural relativism and accusations of "Western imperialism."

The corollary of human rights is individual responsibility, and increasingly, individuals have been held accountable for their actions, as in the case of the Nuremburg Trials and the ad hoc Tribunals for Yugoslavia and Rwanda. In 2002, the Rome Statute entered into force establishing the permanent International Criminal Court.

As well as its Western bias, international law has faced several other criticisms; for example, from a feminist analysis, its maintenance of the public/private dichotomy is seen as being detrimental to addressing violence against women, most of which takes place within the private sphere.

Ultimately, international law is perhaps best regarded as a mechanism for dealing with issues and disputes rather than a panacea for international conflicts.

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See also [Humanitarian Intervention](#); Rights, Human and Natural; [Sovereignty](#), [State](#)

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International Relations Theory and Political Thought

International relations theory and political thought

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International Relations Theory and Political Thought

A leading scholar of the post–World War II period lamented that although political thought had produced a rich vein of theoretical speculation centered on the state and domestic order, the same could not be said about relations between states in an international system of states. This can scarcely be said of international relations (IR) theory today. Nor is the scope of the field limited to the interactions of states in a system conceived solely in terms of these singular, bounded components and the dynamics they generate. From its formal beginnings in the aftermath of World War I, with a set of concerns focused almost exclusively on the causes of war and the conditions for peace in the international sphere, the discipline has expanded into a multidimensional intellectual enterprise examining a broad range of actors, structures, and themes and contributing insights across a range of issues pertinent to political, social, and economic thought from diverse theoretical perspectives.

Two distinctive strands of political thought are commonly regarded as characterizing the early development of IR. In direct response to the horrors of the Great War, a cluster of ideas that came to be labeled “idealist” drew on aspects of liberal thought to theorize an international system in which peaceful relations were supported by robust international institutions even in the absence of a sovereign authority to enforce conformity. The power of human reason could make it so if only the requisite political will could be

mustered. The initial “realist” response derided such approaches as utopian at best, regarding the anarchic international sphere as inherently prone to violent conflict and simply not amenable to projects of perpetual peace. The tragic lessons of history were clear, as were the warnings sounded in a tradition of political realism reaching back at least to Thucydides with subsequent contributions from figures such as Niccolò Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, and Carl von Clausewitz.

IR continued to be broadly informed by these approaches throughout the Cold War era although both underwent significant changes, especially in the United States as the behavioral revolution permeated social science scholarship. Neorealism produced a parsimonious theory of the international system that bracketed off normative concerns as unscientific, more sharply divided the domestic from the international, and detached the present more firmly from the past. The structure of the international sphere became the only relevant context for an objectivist, ahistorical style of analysis concerned largely with balance of power dynamics in a self-help system. For its part, neoliberalism maintained faith in the ameliorating effects of international law and institutions while identifying the phenomenon of increasing, complex interdependence among states as an additional key to stability. Although Marxism, feminism, and other critical approaches provided alternative approaches, the sheer size and influence of the neorealist enterprise in the United States ensured its predominance.

The post–Cold War period saw a “new agenda” emerge in IR and, with it, broader developments in political thought along “global” rather than simply “international” lines. Alongside the phenomenon of globalization with its implicit themes of world oneness under the umbrella of a capitalist economic order, numerous tensions produced by the concomitant upsurge in identity politics, failing states, terror wars, financial crises, and climate change have seen IR theory respond through a variety of new approaches or, rather, approaches derived from other strands of social and political thought and applied to the particular concerns of IR scholars in a new global age. Varieties of critical theory, social constructivism, gender theory, green theory, postmodernism/poststructuralism, and postcolonialism now provide students of IR with diverse intellectual resources for attempting to make sense of the world. This is in addition to a stronger profile for

normative international theory and interpretive methodologies, greater interdisciplinarity, and attention to basic epistemological and ontological dimensions of IR theorizing.

IR theory is now a vigorous field of scholarship reflecting a robust discipline no longer overshadowed by political science or “domestic” political theory. As with other disciplines, however, IR now faces the challenges of a world in which emerging centers of power outside of Euro-America are set to challenge not merely its geopolitical dominance, but its intellectual authority too. The question “why is there no international theory?” posed nearly half a century ago has recently been replaced with the equally challenging “why is there no non-Western international theory?” The next half century may see some interesting responses.

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See also [Humanitarian Intervention](#); [International Law](#)

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Irish Political Thought

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Irish Political Thought

The designation in 1541 of Ireland as a kingdom attached to the crown of England created the framework within which a distinctive tradition of Irish political thought was to develop. However, it was only after 1603, following the achievement of stable government throughout the island, that serious debate on constitutional issues began. The question of Ireland's constitutional relationship with England (or Great Britain after the 1707 union of England and Scotland) became a central theme in political thought thereafter and was probed by a number of patriot writers, particularly between 1698 and 1800. A brief outline of the way in which Ireland was governed during this period is required before discussing political ideas. The patriot case for constitutional rights stressed that Ireland was subject to the King of England but not its Parliament. Although this idea of two kingdoms united under one monarch made sense under Henry VIII in 1541, it became increasingly out of touch with the political reality after the Revolution of 1688, as power passed from Crown to Parliament. In practice this meant that the Irish Parliament was under the control of its Westminster counterpart and that Ireland was a kingdom dependent on England. Political participation in eighteenth-century Ireland was restricted to Protestants, and the institutions of public life were populated by a Protestant elite. This was reflected in political thought, which did not argue that Catholics should become involved in political life until the mid-1780s. Most political tracts were the work of Protestants. Catholic authors who did emerge, such as

Charles O'Connor, did not develop an independent strand of political thinking, preferring to make their case in the language of English Whiggery.

It is important to note at the outset that the main features of Irish political thought did not originate with Irish authors but were borrowed from other countries and adapted to suit Irish circumstances. This was clear in the debates over the 1688 Revolution. Irish writers reiterated many of the arguments advanced in England to justify the overthrow of James II, including appeals to divine providence and claims that James had abdicated. The patriot argument for Irish constitutional rights, discussed below, also drew on ideas originating in England, such as John Locke's contract theory and the real Whig tradition. Furthermore, no Irish writers before the 1780s, and only a minority after that, looked beyond the English-style constitution of King, Lords, and Commons.

The Patriot Case for Irish Constitutional Rights

The patriot case for constitutional rights, based on the claim that Ireland was a kingdom independent from England, was the most striking feature of Irish political thought. The foundations of the patriot argument have been traced to the mid-seventeenth century. For example, Patrick Darcy's 1641 treatise asserting the legislative independence of the Irish Parliament has been identified as one precursor of eighteenth-century patriotism. However, the first theoretical assertion of Irish constitutional liberties was William Molyneux's *The Case of Ireland Being Bound by English Acts of Parliament Stated*, published in 1698. Molyneux, a Member of Parliament (MP) in the Irish Parliament at the time, wrote his *Case* in response to the Westminster Parliament's decision to restrict Irish woollen exports to protect English trade interests.

Molyneux's primary aim was to demonstrate that Ireland, as a kingdom independent from England, could not be bound by laws passed in the English Parliament. In doing so, he constructed his case as a series of fallback positions, each providing a separate argument for Ireland's independence from England. Molyneux cited a whole range of historical precedents to show that Ireland's separate status had consistently been acknowledged by English judges and monarchs. Molyneux claimed that

Ireland had voluntarily submitted to be governed by the English crown, through an agreement between Henry II and the Irish Gaelic chiefs. England could not, therefore, legislate for Ireland on the basis that it had conquered the country. This use of precedents became a recurring theme in patriot thought. Other aspects of Molyneux's tract that would feature prominently in the work of subsequent writers included his reverence for the English constitution of King, Lords, and Commons as the ideal form of government and his use of John Locke. Specifically, Molyneux alluded to Locke's argument that all humans were equal by nature and could only be governed by laws to which they had given their consent. It followed that English Acts of Parliament, passed without Irish consent, could have no authority.

The decades immediately after the publication of Molyneux's work brought a change in direction of political thought, as attentions turned toward the Whig and Tory divisions that also characterized political life in England in the same period. However, the issue of Ireland's constitutional liberties reemerged in the 1720s as political controversies over the Declaratory Act of 1720, through which the British Parliament limited the powers of the Irish House of Lords, and Wood's halfpence (involving British minting of copper coins for Ireland), placed strains on Anglo-Irish relations. Jonathan Swift, the Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin, reignited the constitutional debate in his *Drapier's Letters*, written in 1724 in response to Wood's halfpence. Swift portrayed Ireland and England as sister kingdoms, sharing the same King. He emphasized that while Ireland was dependent on the King, it was not dependent on the English Parliament and had its own laws. Swift's work differed from that of Molyneux in its more direct, pragmatic style. He avoided using legal precedents, preferring to base Ireland's claim on natural rights.

The patriot argument presented by Molyneux was used more fully by Charles Lucas, a Dublin apothecary who published a series of controversial tracts in the course of his campaign for election as one of the city's MPs in 1749. Initially concerned with the corruption and exclusivity of Dublin's municipal government, Lucas subsequently analyzed the nature of the Anglo-Irish relationship and sought to demonstrate Ireland's independence from the London Parliament. Lucas's use of historic precedents to show that

Ireland should not be bound by laws made in the English Parliament echoed the work of Molyneux, as did his references to the agreement with Henry II and his appeals to Lockian ideas on government with the consent of the governed.

The main features of Molyneux's *Case of Ireland* remained central to patriot political thought in the late 1770s and early 1780s. This period brought campaigns for free trade and legislative independence, culminating in the removal of the commercial restrictions in 1779 and the abolition of Poynings's Law in 1782, which had placed the Irish Parliament under British control. Henry Grattan, a lawyer and MP who took the lead in these campaigns, turned again to the theoretical argument for Irish constitutional rights in a series of speeches in Parliament. In addition to reciting the by now familiar appeals to precedent to demonstrate that England could not claim a right to pass laws for Ireland, Grattan emphasized the rights of the subject to accept only laws to which it had consented, through representatives in Parliament.

A Patriot “Tradition”?

These authors clearly employed similar arguments in their efforts to prove Ireland's legislative independence from Great Britain, and this demonstrates how the patriot case developed as the eighteenth century progressed. However, the temptation to interpret eighteenth-century Irish political thought in terms of an evolving anti-English patriot “tradition” or “canon” should be resisted since the patriot argument was not always the main issue in public debate. There was much concern about defending Ireland's constitutional rights in the early eighteenth century, resulting from a series of intrusions from London. Similarly, British policy toward Ireland in the late eighteenth century led to further constitutional disputes. However, the constitutional question was of limited importance in the pamphlet literature of the period between the publication of Swift's *Drapier's Letters* in 1724 and Lucas's campaign of 1749. London's more careful approach to Irish affairs, combined with a new obsession with economic improvement, ensured that authors of political tracts in this period accepted that Ireland was, in practice, dependent on Great Britain. Moreover, it was sometimes the case that the key patriot texts discussed above were not representative of

wider Irish political opinion even at the time of their publication. Molyneux's work, although lauded by later patriot writers, was not welcomed by his contemporaries in Dublin, who feared that it would antagonize policy makers in London. Lucas met with a particularly hostile reaction from a political elite alarmed as much by the threat he posed to the established political order as his criticisms of the British connection.

Two further factors indicate that there are problems with the idea of a coherent and widely accepted Irish patriot tradition. First, it must be recognized that many patriot texts were polemical in nature and were usually a response to specific political events or controversies. Often the participants in these episodes were motivated to adopt the patriot argument by political opportunism. Perhaps more significantly, it is clear that patriot texts presenting a theoretical statement of Ireland's independence from the London Parliament often prompted the publication of counterarguments questioning the validity of using historic precedents and legal reasoning. This can be demonstrated by considering the case of Lucas, whose main challenger was Sir Richard Cox, a landowner and MP from County Cork. Cox argued that Lucas's use of precedents was irrelevant since it was only after the Revolution of 1688 that a settled constitution emerged in Great Britain and Ireland. Cox also rejected another cornerstone of the patriot case, the idea that Ireland was dependent on the King of England but not on its Parliament. This was, Cox noted, out of touch with the political realities since the Revolution had ensured that the King was himself under the direction of the Parliament; in practice Ireland's dependence on the King meant dependence on the London Parliament. Cox replaced the theoretical tone employed by Lucas, Molyneux, and later Grattan with appeals to pragmatism and suggested that patriotism was not about constitutional freedoms and legal theorizing but about improving the condition of one's country in the context of the given political circumstances.

The Radicalization of Irish Political Thought

With the issue of legislative independence from England settled in 1782, attentions turned to problems with the system of government that were said to prevent Ireland from enjoying the full benefits of the 1782 reforms. This led to a number of significant new developments in political thought, as

events in America and continental Europe began to influence Irish authors. The era of the American War of Independence produced a marked change in the tone of Irish political debate in general, of which William Drennan's *Letters of Orellana, an Irish Helot* represents the most significant theoretical statement. Drennan, an Ulster Presbyterian, penned his work in the context of a campaign for parliamentary reform. He complained that the 1782 constitutional reforms were unsatisfactory since they left political power in the hands of a corrupt Irish Parliament that was unaccountable to the people. Moving away from the previous patriot position and toward the idea of government through the will of the people, Drennan declared that the British-style constitution of King, Lords, and Commons was not the way to ensure balanced government. Drennan suggested that this desired balance and constitutional liberties could only be protected through frequent parliamentary elections and a wider franchise.

Although Drennan's argument was influenced by developments in America, the French Revolution of 1789 had a further radicalizing impact on political thought in Ireland. The French Revolution helped to reshape attitudes toward the participation of Catholics in Irish politics and paved the way for the emergence of ideas of democratic republicanism. Although Drennan had earlier advocated that political power in Ireland should be regulated by the will of the people, he qualified this position, suggesting that Catholics, still prone to religious prejudice, were not yet ready to be entrusted with political power. This view was challenged in *An Argument on Behalf of the Catholics of Ireland*, published in 1791. Its author, Wolfe Tone, a founder of the United Irishmen and himself a Protestant, argued that the French Revolution demonstrated that Catholics could embrace liberty and that their inclusion in the franchise was essential if Irish parliamentary reform was to succeed. In other respects, Tone's work echoed that of Drennan. He criticized the constitutional reforms of 1782 on the basis that they transferred power to a corrupt Irish political elite and, like previous patriot writers, continued to profess loyalty to the King. It must be recognized that the radical theories emanating from France did not gain universal acceptance. In addition to their radicalizing influence, they also forced many Irish Protestants toward a more conservative brand of political thought, which sought to justify the dominant position of the Protestant elite in Irish society.

The Catholic question remained the central issue in political debate after the eighteenth century. However, the Act of Union of 1801 effectively ended the distinctive Irish tradition of political thought and its claim that Ireland was a kingdom independent from England. In extinguishing the kingdom of Ireland, the Act of Union removed the constitutional framework within which this tradition had developed. Thereafter, the Irish claim for independence was based on the right of the people to self-determination. Romanticism, practical activism, and the mobilization of the people became much more important than the theoretical argument for Irish constitutional rights.

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See also [Burke, Edmund](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Locke, John](#)

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Islamic Political Thought

In Islam, as it was understood by most Muslims at least until the twentieth century, the nature and form of the polity were supposed to have been determined by divine revelation. Recently, however, some have asked whether the political praxis of early Islam was not a human response to particular circumstances.

Islamic Political Thought Up to the Twentieth Century

In traditional Islamic political thought, the only significant human community was the Muslim people (*ummah*). This was led by the Prophet's successor and deputy (caliph), the leader (imam) of the people. His worldwide political, military, and religious authority was prescribed by God. The caliph's functions were to ensure observance of the Shari'a; to spread Islam by teaching, building mosques, funding religious education, and holy war (jihad); to ensure the collection and administration of the alms (*zakat*) that all Muslims were obliged to contribute; and to provide safe public highways for pilgrims. Spiritual and secular authority were not distinguished. The great figures of Muslim legal-theological tradition, such as al-Mawardi (974–1058) and Ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328), vigorously reasserted the unity between the religious and the political even against the grain of their own times.

The overriding purpose of the *ummah* and its leader was to propagate the message given by God to Muhammad in the Qur'an, to persuade all humans to believe in it, and to observe the law (Shari'a) prescribed by God in the Qur'an and *hadith* (sayings of the prophet). This law was supposed to cover every aspect of a person's life, public and private, from marriage and crime to commerce and war. The details of right conduct were the subject of endless debate, much as the details of right belief were in Christianity. Under Islam, jurisprudence rather than theology was the usual touchstone of religious orthodoxy: "[T]he foundation of this religion is jurisprudence," as the late-eleventh-century philosopher and mystic al-Ghazali put it.

The Shari'a was the full and final embodiment of justice. Right and wrong could only be known through God's revelation; human reason could not provide a moral code. The Shari'a emphasized duties above all; it also gave Muslims rights to property and recourse to a judge. The Shari'a was held to have been determined by the consensus (*ijma'*) of the early jurists. Only in recent times was it thought that individuals could undertake fundamental revisions through their use of reason (*jtihad*). Legal expertise bestowed authority on the '*ulama* (lit. scholars) as persons qualified to settle disputes and guide believers.

Those who do not accept Islam, or at least Islamic rule, voluntarily have to be subdued by coercive force. Missionary war was a religious obligation for all male Muslims unless others were already fulfilling it. However, people cannot be forced to believe (Qur'an 2:256). Other monotheists were to be tolerated as protected peoples (*dhimmis*) who could practice their own religion and its laws, but they could not publicize their faith or build new places of worship. For polytheists and unbelievers, it was conversion or death.

The question of how the caliph should be chosen gave rise to the first schisms in Islam. Some held that he should be chosen by a consensus of community leaders; this became the Sunni (lit., traditional) view. Others held that Muhammad had designated as his successor his son-in-law, 'Ali, who in turn designated his successor from his own family, and so on; this became the Shi'ite (lit., partisan) view. After the mid-ninth century, the

Twelver (Imami) Shi'ites believed that the Twelfth Imam had gone into hiding and would one day return to establish perfect justice.

The caliph and ruler was obliged to observe the Shari'a like anyone else, but there were no constitutional limits on his power, and no procedures for getting rid of a bad ruler. A doctrine of nonresistance developed: People should be prepared to tolerate misrule, short of apostasy (according to a popular proverb, "one day of disorder is worse than a hundred years of injustice"). Silence about grievances and tactical dissimulation (*taqiyya*) of one's view of the ruler was regarded as an act of merit; social solidarity was the most important thing.

Classical Islam contributed to the development of political philosophy. The Muslim philosophers of the eighth to twelfth centuries argued that law and the political authority to enforce it arose out of human nature, although the perfect forms of these—caliphate and Shari'a—had been revealed by God. As they saw it, people have to live together to survive; as Ibn Rushd (writing in Spain, 1126–98) put it, people are born with different but complementary natural dispositions. But humans living together are bound to quarrel, so they have to have laws. Laws in turn need a coercive authority to enforce them. Al-Farabi (writing in Iraq and Syria, c. 870–950) equated Plato's philosopher-king with the virtuous caliph. Ibn Khaldun (writing in North Africa, 1332–1406) postulated a theory of social dynamics, according to which people living in the wilderness develop a group spirit (*'asabiyya*) that enables them to overcome urban civilization. But they in turn become civilized and corrupt, and so the process is constantly repeated. This was an attempt to explain the decline of the Islamic caliphate.

Modern Islamic Political Thought

Islamic political thought changed little until the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries. New developments were brought about by confrontation with Western hegemony. Europe now came to be seen either as a model of how states should be organized or as materially advanced but spiritually depraved. Islamic intellectuals reacted to the challenges of European science and material development, and the tremors that these set off across the Islamic world, either by syncretism—seeing certain Western

ideas as expressions of true Islam—by revivalism—going back to the sources of revelation—or by a combination of the two.

In the later nineteenth century, reformists within the Ottoman Empire (the “Young Ottomans” or “Young Turks”) argued that decline of Muslim power resulted from corrupt and tyrannical government. They also argued that the “Western” principles of individual liberty, constitutional government, and representative democracy had been borrowed from original Islam. The political language of Islam could be updated by seeing the original “contract” between caliph and people as a delegation of sovereignty, and the Qur’anic injunction to take counsel (*shura*) as implying parliamentary democracy. Nevertheless the decisions of a democratic majority have to be reconciled with the abstract right laid down by God.

Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1837–97) declared that the revival of Islam required an active civic spirit and constitutional or republican government. He insisted that Muslims had the right and duty to adapt the social teachings of the Shari’a to the modern age by using their individual judgment to reengage with the original sources of revelation, setting aside later accretions.

Rashid Rida (1865–1935) adopted this approach in his *On the Caliphate (Al-khilafa)*, written in 1922–23 while the caliphate was being abolished by the Turkish revolution. Rida argued that Muslims need a caliph but as a worldwide figurehead who would not supplant existing states; he should preside both over Muslim states and over Muslims living under “foreign rule” in a kind of confederation or “commonwealth.” Rida said that notables or prominent citizens, as well as electing the caliph, should exercise *shura* (consultation) in administration and legislation.

‘Ali ‘Abd al-Raziq (1888–1966) put forth an opposite point of view in his *Islam and the Roots of Governance (al-Islam wa Usul al-Hukm)* (1925). He argued that the caliphate was but a product of historical circumstances, and that it was no longer necessary. Muhammad had intended to found a religion but not a state. Muslims today, therefore, are free to exercise their own judgment on what form of government is best. These two thinkers may be seen as having articulated the basic premises of Islamism and modernism, respectively.

Islamism

Islamism as a social and political movement started with the foundation of the Society of Muslim Brethren (Jam'iyyat al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin) by Hasan al-Banna in 1928. The Muslim Brethren reaffirmed the view that Islam has its own agenda for political, social, and economic life ("Islam is a faith and a ritual, a nation (*watan*) and a nationality, a religion and a state, spirituality and action, Qur'an and sword" [al-Banna, cited in Mitchell 1969, 233]). They aimed to preach and convert as well as to educate and provide social welfare. Political activity was seen as a means to these ends.

The Muslim Brethren were a mass movement. Islamism is sometimes seen as a reaction to social and economic conditions, rapid urbanization, and the dislocation of traditional communities. However, the idea of going back to sources ("fundamentals," *usul*), of reviving an original Golden Age, is almost as old as Islam itself.

Abu'l-A'la al-Maududi (1903–79) promoted similar ideas in India. He returned to a literalist view of revelation and insisted that the Shari'a is unchangeable. He was convinced that, to revive the Shari'a, true Muslims had to get hold of political power. He founded the People of Islam (Jama'at-i Islami) as a spiritual elite. He opposed the idea of a secular state. It is with Maududi that the idea of Pakistan as an "Islamic state," based on a conservative reading of the Shari'a, originated. He described the contemporary state in traditional Islamic terms: The ruler is an elected *amir* (lit., military commander); Parliament is an expression of shura (counsel); and it cannot legislate on matters not covered by the Shari'a.

Both the Brethren and Maududi had enormous influence not only in their own countries (Egypt and Pakistan, respectively) but also in many parts of the Muslim community. The thinker to whom the more radical Islamists today look most for inspiration is the Egyptian poet-teacher Sayyid Qutb (1906–66), whose *Milestones* (*Ma'alim fi'l tariq*; lit., *Signposts along the Way*) was published in 1965. Qutb argued that the Qur'an contains all anybody needs to know about politics. He saw Islamic and Western values as fundamentally different, and he insisted that Islam has nothing to learn from the West. The Qur'an should be read as poetry; it should be

interpreted, not by the traditional *'ulama* but by enlightened individuals using their own sensibility (one is tempted to say, a Leavisite approach). A righteous social and political system can be discovered by the sensitive reader in the pages of the Qur'an. "Islam altogether presents to mankind an example of a political system, the like of which has never been found in any of the other systems known to the world" (Qutb 1953, 88–91). Qutb was imprisoned, tortured, and eventually executed by President Nasser in 1966.

Islamists argue that a comprehensive and precise blueprint for an Islamic state, quite different from anything that can be found in the recent past or at any time since early Islam, can in fact be discerned in the founding texts of Islam, if one looks hard enough. Yet (or perhaps because of this) Islamism is remarkably lacking in constitutional detail. As Nazih Ayubi put it in his *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World* (1991, 42), "fundamentalists" tend to dismiss the details of constitutions and governmental procedures—the stuff of practical politics—as "futile arguments about mere technicalities . . . one may search the manifestoes of the Muslim Brethren or the Iranian clerics for a detailed description of what an Islamic *state* or an Islamic *economy* should look like, but such a search will be in vain."

In some ways, the Islamists' view of the legitimate use of violence in domestic or international politics is not much different from that of many Western thinkers. According to Qutb, for example, violence should only be used when peaceful methods have been tried. It is justified as a response to violence by the state. On the other hand, acts of political violence by individuals are viewed by some radicals, not so much as a means to specific political ends, but as self-sacrificing martyrdom, to be pursued as a glorious end in itself, regardless of the consequences.

The Iranian Revolution

The Iranian revolution of 1979, led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (1902–89), was inspired by Islamism of a different type. Its political theory was a development of Shi'ite thought. Originally, Shi'ites had adopted quietism to avoid persecution. Only when the Twelfth Imam returned would the faithful be called to political action. But after the Safavids' conquest of

Iran in 1500, some Shi'ite thinkers, led by al-Karaki (c. 1466–1534) developed a political theology of clerical activism. A new category of religious expert, the “well-qualified Jurist (*mujtahid*),” was introduced. These were capable of guiding the faithful by making their own independent judgments on matters of religious law. Collectively, they represented, by means of a kind of trusteeship (*vilaya*), the Hidden Imam. The most eminent Mujtahids were called Ayatollahs. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when there was little stable or impartial government in Iran, the Mujtahids became the effective leaders of the community.

Khomeini expounded his religio-political theory in *Islamic Government: The Mandate of the Jurist* (originally given as lectures in Najaf, Iraq, in 1970). Khomeini taught that, further, when there is an *individual* Jurist whose learning and justice are sufficiently outstanding, the Hidden Imam's trusteeship falls upon him alone. The *Constitutional Law of the Islamic Republic of Iran* (1979) stated that “during the Occultation of the (Hidden Imam), the Mandate and Leadership (*imamat*) of the Community devolve upon the just and pious Jurist” (article 5). But Khomeini also said that sovereignty originates from the community. The Iranian constitution combines democratic elections with clerical oversight in a manner reminiscent of Plato's *Laws*.

Like the Sunni Islamists, Khomeini insisted that one must establish an Islamic government, and that the example of the Prophet showed this clearly. Put the Shari'a into practice, and all the present-day evils of society and of the whole world will be sorted out. For the Shari'a is God-given, and it was precisely God's intention to cover the whole of human life with His Law, which “amounts to a complete social system” with “regulations concerning war and peace and intercourse with other nations; penal and commercial law; and regulations pertaining to trade and agriculture” (1981, 43). Only an Islamic government can be relied on to implement the Shari'a.

Another inspiration behind the Iranian revolution was the public intellectual 'Ali Shari'ati (1933–77). He assimilated the Islamic philosophy of history with the Marxist. He denounced both Muslim quietism and Western imperialism, whose consumerist culture threatened to become hegemonic

throughout the world. In his *What Is to Be Done: The Enlightened Thinkers and an Islamic Renaissance*, Shari'ati declared that only the revival of independent reasoning (*ijtihad*) will guarantee "permanent revolution." Islam's original mission, he said, had been to liberate the "oppressed," and this nowadays means the poor and exploited in Iran and the Third World. In the Qur'anic perspective, the pursuit of religious truth and the victory of the oppressed are one and the same. (This view has recently been restated by the South African political scientist Farid Ezack.) The Qur'anic view is precisely that the *people* should be empowered through an understanding of "the laws (*sunan*) of history, the laws of social change."

Islamic Political Thought Today

Generally speaking, the principles of popular sovereignty and the rule of law are supported by most Islamic thinkers, fundamentalist as well as liberalreformist, but often only in general terms. For Islamists, the Shari'a is the only valid legal system, so that the legislative scope of Parliament is limited. On the other hand, they tend to see an elected Parliament as the proper instrument for interpreting the Shari'a. Representatives must be properly qualified: They must have the moral and intellectual qualities needed for leadership of an Islamic community.

Islam upholds the sanctity of private property, with wealth being used for the good of the community, especially the less well-off. Every attempt is made to avoid taking interest on loans. It can be seen as a middle ground between capitalism and socialism.

All parts of the world under Muslim rule (the *dar al-Islam*: house of Islam or of peace) were traditionally conceived as a unitary sociopolitical order in which the same worship, rites, ethics, and laws ran without boundaries. The idea that nationality can or should be the basis of civic identity is alien to Islam. But, until all believe in the one God and implement his revealed law, there is a fundamental division between the house of Islam and the house of conflict (*dar al-harb*). The relationship between these was traditionally conceived in terms of jihad, although occasional truces were permissible. Today, however, many Muslim thinkers, such as the Malaysian academic AbuSulayman, argue, on the basis of a different interpretation of the

Qur'anic texts, for the abandonment of military jihad, and for a new world order based on the unity and equality of humankind.

Reformists believe that the Shari'a has to be extensively reinterpreted so as to fulfill its original intention and serve the needs of Muslims today. The traditional concept of *maslaha* (social need) has been developed, by Muhammad 'Abduh (1849–1905), for example, to mean the common good or social utility in general. 'Abduh, who became highly respected as a pious reformer, argued that the whole purpose of morality and law was to promote the common good. This made considerable reinterpretation possible.

An even more radical step has been taken by Mahmud Muhammad Taha and his pupil Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im (1946–). Both are from the Sudan. Taha was executed by the regime of President Gaafar Numeiri in 1985; An-Na'im now lives in the United States. Taha developed (under divine guidance, he claimed) a radical distinction between those parts of the Qur'an that had been revealed to Muhammad at Mecca during the initial stage of his prophecy, and those parts that were revealed at a later stage at Medina, when the fledgling Muslim community was struggling for its existence. The former were concerned only with ethics; it was only in the latter phase that, for circumstantial reasons, Muhammad started speaking about political action and the use of force. Crucially, Taha argued that the Meccan stage constituted the fundamental revelation, while the later, Medinan stage was an accommodation to the needs of the time. Therefore, the former overrides the latter they, under the changed circumstances of today, can be set aside.

All the texts that advocate the use of coercive force or compulsion of any kind to promote religion derive from the Medinan period. They may, therefore, be overridden by the more fundamental moral principles proclaimed during the earlier (Meccan) phase. Taha held that the texts that are cited in support of jihad, slavery, capitalism, gender inequality, and polygyny all come from the Medinan period and are for that reason not applicable today.

To say that the Qur'an is an ethical rather than a political document has repercussions on practically every aspect of political thought. For the first time, it gives the textual, Qur'anic initiative to humanitarian modernizers

and liberal reformers. It becomes far easier to put forward a modern, liberal, or socialist agenda within Islam. It also makes it much easier to accept the separation of religion and state. In his most recent work, *Islam and the Secular State* (2008), An-Na'im argues that although it is appropriate, indeed desirable, that religious principles should play a part in political discourse, they cannot be enforced by the state without losing their spiritual character.

This puts the discourse of human rights on a different plane. Traditional Muslim thought denied the equality of women and gave only limited rights to non-Muslim monotheists, and none at all to anyone else. Modern Muslims have struggled to assert social equality for women, but hardly one Muslim thinker—and not a single Muslim-controlled state—has given civil or political rights to non-monotheists; only a few have given civil rights to non-Muslim monotheists. This is even true of the Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights (1981). An-Na'im, however, insists unequivocally both on the equality of women and on freedom and toleration for believers of any kind, and for unbelievers. In his view, the universal moral principle of reciprocity stipulates equal rights for all citizens, be they Muslim or non-Muslim, female or male.

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See also [African Political Thought](#); [Arab Nationalism](#); [Citizenship](#); [Conservatism](#); [Ethnicity and Political Thought](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [State, Theories of the](#)

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Isolationism

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Isolationism

Isolationism, a long-standing strain of U.S. political thought, has traditionally been defined as a refusal to participate in wars outside the Western Hemisphere, particularly in Europe; an opposition to binding military alliances; and lack of participation in organizations of collective security. Above all, the “isolationist” desires to maintain the United States’ autonomy, a freedom of action unhindered by the policies of allies. Such people often differ from pacifists, those who would renounce any war and withhold backing for any conflict. Proponents of the isolationist position usually reject the label, finding it derogatory. As most isolationists oppose “isolating” the United States from either the world’s culture or its commerce, they have long preferred such terms as “neutralist,” “nationalist,” “noninterventionist,” or “anti-interventionist.”

Isolationism centers on the belief that foreign alliances and overseas military involvements would invariably weaken the United States. Those on the right warn against prohibitive taxes, regimentation of the economy, and the loss of classic “republicanism.” Those on the left fear the advent of a garrison state that would obliterate social reform and abolish civil liberties. In either case, the nation would inevitably be weakened, perhaps irreparably so, and risk military defeat.

From 1776 through the early twentieth century, the nation has pursued an isolationist foreign policy. The stance was articulated in such documents as Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense* (1776), John Adams’s Model Treaty

(1776), George Washington's Farewell Address (1796), Thomas Jefferson's First Inaugural Address (1801), and James Monroe's annual message of 1823, in which the fifth president proclaimed the Monroe Doctrine.

Admittedly, the United States engaged in several major conflicts with other powers during the nineteenth century—the War of 1812, the Mexican War, and the Spanish-American War. Yet, because the United States fought all these conflicts unilaterally and not as part of any binding combination, it did not violate isolationist tenets. Even in 1917, when it entered World War I, it did so as an “associated power” and not as a full-scale partner of the Allies. It displayed its determination to remain aloof from coercive international bodies when, in 1919 and 1920, its Senate twice turned down entrance into the League of Nations.

The high tide of isolationism took place during the years 1934–37.

Congress, in an effort to avoid the pitfalls through which the United States entered World War I, passed a series of bills called the neutrality acts. These included legislation imposing an arms embargo to belligerents once the president declared that a state of war existed, a prohibition on loans and credits to belligerents, and a ban on passengers traveling on ships belonging to belligerents. The 1937 law banned the arming of all merchant ships trading with belligerents and gave the president discretionary authority to sell nonembargoed goods on a “cash-and-carry basis,” by which belligerents pay for shipments at time of purchase and transported all goods on their own vessels. In 1934, Congress also forbade private loans to defaulting nations and a year later voted down membership in the World Court.

Once war broke out in Europe in 1939, isolationists fought a rearguard action against American involvement. They opposed repeal of the arms embargo in later 1939, conscription in summer 1940, extension of term limits for draftees in summer 1941, and the repeal of “cash and carry” that fall. Such figures as aviator Charles A. Lindbergh, financial writer John T. Flynn, Congressman Hamilton Fish (R-NY), and Senators Gerald P. Nye (R-ND) and Burton K. Wheeler (D-Mont.) spoke under the auspices of the America First Committee, an organization formed in September 1940 as a clearinghouse for research, lectures, and radio broadcasts. After the war, such “revisionist” historians as Charles A. Beard, Harry Elmer Barnes, and

Charles Callan Tansill sought to prove the wisdom of the isolationist position, even at times finding an administration conspiracy behind the Pearl Harbor attack.

During the Cold War, isolationists met with continual failure. They could not prevent American entry into the United Nations (1945) or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (1949). When the Korean War broke out, many still opposed collective security but reversed their traditional stance to back the “victory” strategy of General Douglas MacArthur. They failed to enact a constitutional amendment limiting presidential treaty-making power. Although many Americans increasingly opposed participation in the Vietnam War, the Gulf War (1990–91), the Iraq War (2003–10), and the Afghan War (2001–), few could be called isolationists, for they did in principle not repudiate membership in international collective security organizations, overseas military assistance, economic sanctions, or even the use of combat forces in certain conditions. They describe their position as “interest-based policies,” “strategic disengagement,” and “strategic independence.” Remnants of classical isolationism are found in the Cato Institute, the presidential bids of businessman Ross Perot and Congressman Ron Paul (R.-Tex.), and the writings of Pat Buchanan and the editorial staff of *Chronicles* magazine.

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See also [Humanitarian Intervention](#); [Pacifism](#)

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Italian Political Thought

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Italian Political Thought

Italy is home to some of the earliest reflections on the nature of modern, secular politics and the state. With its ancient Roman and Renaissance heritage, it has provided some of the most widely adopted concepts of political thought: for example, ideas such as “civic republicanism,” the “state,” “liberty,” or the division between “elites” and “masses.” But is there a distinctly *Italian* tradition of political thought? Italy’s late emergence as a nation-state, its enduring medieval traditions and localism, its status as the seat of the Catholic Church, and the relative marginality of liberal ideas in its political development, undoubtedly, have all helped dampen the more optimistic assumptions about modernity that characterize other parts of Europe. If Italian thinkers have largely tracked the dominant concerns of modern political thought and ideology, as we can see below, nevertheless they have been at their most inventive when seeking to debunk some of the dominant myths of modernity. In Italy, where the state has remained relatively weak in relation to the wider society, the aspiration for an autonomous and free political community has been embraced frequently with enthusiasm but often with a realistic awareness of the obstacles that litter the path to its achievement.

The Humanist Heritage

Between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries, the northern Italian city-states—particularly Florence, Milan, and Venice—provided the context for a

series of reflections on the nature of politics and political community that began to stake out a distinctly modern, secular idea of the state. In defiance of the power of Papal authority, thinkers such as Marsiglio of Padua, Brunetto Latini, and later and most famously, Niccolò Machiavelli, defended a republican idea of liberty that drew on classical authors such as Aristotle and Cicero.

Reworking the ancient tradition of rhetorical advice-giving, Italian writers developed a notion of politics conceived as the maintenance of the freedom of the city from arbitrary interference: a practice guided by its own rules, separate from Divine commands, and concerning the governance of humans as imperfect beings. Political knowledge was to be gained from the observation and emulation of human conduct rather than from revealed religion. This “humanist” approach to politics had a vital impact on the early modern development of political thought across Europe. In the works of Machiavelli, in particular, politics was conceived as a practice aimed primarily at securing the autonomy of *lo stato* (the state) from both internal and external domination. Machiavelli has since become notorious for a purportedly amoral conception of politics, as set out in his work *The Prince*, which advocated a ruthless style of leadership, ruling by guile and violence, unrestrained by ethical considerations. But his other writings indicate an enduring normative concern with the freedom of the republic’s citizens to develop their own laws, albeit a concern adapted to the uncertainties of the age.

By the middle of the sixteenth century, however, the city-states had all lost their autonomy and succumbed to the rivalries of princes and foreign powers. Elsewhere, Italian civic republicanism inspired the participants of the English Civil War and, later, the American and French revolutions against the *anciens régimes*. However, in Italy, the legacy of humanism consisted not in galvanizing the forces of modernity but in generating skepticism toward the abstract rationalism and universalism of the Enlightenment. The Neapolitan philosopher Giambattista Vico, for example, famously defended the significance of historical knowledge and cultural variation against Cartesian rationalism in his *New Science* of 1725. Likewise, the humanist tradition imbued many later thinkers in Italy with a marked appreciation of the fluctuating stability of political life in the face of

historical contingencies. In such circumstances, political success has often been put down to the capacity of creative individuals or an elite, rather than political culture generally, to successfully manage the ebb and flow of political fortune.

The *Risorgimento* and Nation Building

A common preoccupation among Italian political thinkers reemerged after the French Revolution of 1789, which rekindled the demand for political liberty and further reflection on the character of the state. The Revolution spurred a nationalistic desire to reform the territorially fragmented, foreign-backed, and mostly monarchical systems across the peninsula. In their place was imagined an autonomous and unified constitutional order based on administrative efficiency and popular legitimacy. The French revolutionary experience dominated Italian political discourse in the nineteenth century, providing not only models to emulate but also rudely exposing the limits to any similar ambitions. Paradoxically, Napoleonic rule over Italy after 1796 raised the hopes of many reformers but effectively reduced the possibility for unification since France's emperor would brook no competition from another European state. After the restoration of monarchical rule in 1815, political repression further limited the opportunities for Italian nationalists. Radical reformers and romantic nationalists (or "patriots") were forced into secret societies, such as the *Carbonari*, which organized various uprisings in the early to mid-nineteenth century.

The broad-based movement for reform was later known as the *Risorgimento* (implying the "resurgence" or "resurrection" of Italy's once great past) and combined both moderate demands for constitutional monarchy with more radical hopes for republican and democratic government. Although broadly "liberal," proponents of national unification were divided about both the means and the goals of the movement. The activist and propagandist, Giuseppe Mazzini—undoubtedly the dominant figure of Italian nationalism—favored a centrally unified state based on universal principles of national solidarity and republican liberty. Mazzini's liberal nationalism often veered into mysticism, imagining a spiritual transformation of Italians into citizens of a state achieved through popular insurrection and common religious

sentiment. For his efforts, Mazzini spent much of his life either in exile or in prison.

Others were much less enamored of Mazzini's democratic ideals. For instance, the economist and free trader Carlo Cattaneo preferred a federal arrangement that would allow the particularism of Italy's medieval communities to flourish, as well as avoid the dangers of a Jacobin-style imposition of unity. The liberal Catholic Vincenzo Gioberti went further, envisaging a confederation of separate states unified by the spiritual authority of the Papacy. Yet, outside the small number of educated intellectuals and a restricted middle class, the wider public—mostly peasants—did not clamor for systematic change.

With differences such as these, it was the moderate rather than the radical liberals who steered Italy to unity under the leadership of the constitutional monarchy of Piedmont in 1861. The unification of Italy (only finally completed in 1871 with the incorporation of Rome) was proclaimed an achievement of national liberty, but its many shortcomings drove political debates well into the twentieth century. The absence of widespread popular participation in the *Risorgimento*, the domination of Parliament by a restricted elite, the church's refusal to recognize the new kingdom, and the authoritarian manner in which the state supported its precarious grip on the diverse and socially divided peninsula provoked deep disappointment among Italian intellectuals. As the statesman Massimo d'Azeglio is famously reported to have claimed: "We have made Italy, now we must make Italians." This sense of incompleteness to the national revolution drove the ambitions of later, postunification thinkers and ideologues still seeking to reconnect people and state.

The Age of Ideology

The lingering problem of how to forge a national community threw up a number of alternative answers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These reflected both the prevailing social theories of the time and the contrasting responses to the increasingly "mass" and democratic character of modern political life. The period between unification and the end of World War II saw a proliferation of political ideologies in Italy.

Positivist and idealist strands of thought competed to offer a theoretical horizon against which national reconciliation might be imagined. Neither strand reflected much confidence in the liberal form of government or the prospects for the peaceful harmonization of individual freedoms.

In separate works inspired by positivism, Vilfredo Pareto and Gaetano Mosca provided theories of the “ruling elite” that posited as a “universal law” the tendency for political organizations to concentrate power in the hands of a leading minority. Basing their claims on extensive empirical observation, they ridiculed as “utopian” the socialist demand for popular control over government. Political elites might “circulate” over time, drawing personnel from different social classes, but politics itself always entailed a competition for the rewards of office and the cynical manipulation by the more audacious of those with less intellectual and material resources. Perhaps appropriately, Pareto, a disillusioned liberal economist, eventually supported the fascists. But the conservative Mosca came to endorse liberal democracy, if rather reluctantly. For both, however, the division between those who “lead” and those who are “led” was a fundamental characteristic of all political systems, a view that remained influential among Italian thinkers but that mostly mirrored the customs of its own polity.

Positivism was also influential on the left in the form of Marxism, which from the late nineteenth century became the dominant theory of Italian socialism. Achille Loria had introduced a crudely materialist, economically deterministic doctrine of historical evolution in the 1880s. The Italian Socialist Party, founded in 1892, followed other member parties of the Second International in adopting a popular version of this scientific account of Marxism. Yet, despite its revolutionary credentials, Marxism had little practical impact on the organization of the Socialist Party, which under the leadership of Filippo Turati distinguished its program according to “maximal” and “minimal” objectives. The former referred to the full socialization of the means of production, whereas the latter referred to democratic reforms within capitalism.

A more sophisticated engagement with Marx came from those who opposed positivism, such as the neo-Hegelian philosopher Antonio Labriola. In his

Essays on the Materialist Conception of History of 1896, Labriola rejected naturalistic materialism with its mechanistic account of history in favor of a theory of “praxis” in which thought and action were understood as a dialectical unity. Revolution was therefore conceived as the culmination of a process of development in consciousness and its engagement with the practical world, not a reflex of economic “laws.” Although it strongly influenced the Marxism of later figures such as Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937), Labriola’s philosophy was popular more with intellectuals than with political leaders or the wider public.

Hegelian ideas had also influenced the conservative Bertrando Spaventa, who regarded philosophical idealism as itself originally rooted in the Italian Renaissance and who defended the unified state as the historical culmination of Italians’ self-consciousness. Idealists, in a very broad sense, underscored the role of subjective agency and self-education, rather than blind material forces, in historical change. If for Spaventa the national state was the outcome of this process, for Labriola, it was socialism and the revolution yet to come.

The “historicist” philosophy of Benedetto Croce represented a further development in the idealist tradition. Although not an explicitly political philosopher, Croce’s work encompassed most aspects of life, including aesthetics and politics. He, too, denounced the positivist approach to knowledge as spiritually barren, proposing, instead, to ground truth and value in an open-ended conception of history, conceived as the progressive development of human freedom. Croce rejected both orthodox Hegelianism and Marxism for reducing history to a rigid logic that imposed on it a preconceived trajectory. Instead, he advocated a view of history as a process of interrelated but distinct dimensions of thought and practice, continually advancing in light of new challenges. At first, Croce saw politics as a separate, amoral activity based on an instrumental dimension of human practice. But, in light of fascism, he came to emphasize the way moral ideals motivated key individuals to promote the expansion of freedom.

Croce’s philosophy was enormously influential in the first half of the twentieth century, feeding a desire to release subjective agency from stale metaphysical hierarchies and to renew Italian national culture. Gramsci, for

example, the Sardinian-born Marxist based in Turin, embraced Croce's "historicism" for the cause of revolutionary socialism, conceived as a process of class enculturation. But Croce was, much later, also a source of inspiration to liberal and non-Marxist socialists engaged in antifascist politics in the 1930s who wished to underscore their "faith" in the ideal of freedom.

At the end of the second decade of the twentieth century, however, liberal government and ideas were in profound crisis. That opened the way to more aggressive, antiliberal traditions seeking to replace the state altogether. Anarchist and revolutionary syndicalist movements (the latter strongly influenced by the work of the Frenchman, Georges Sorel) had prospered for decades prior to the war, particularly in parts of Italy's North with its traditions of independent artisans. These continued a long-standing antistatist and anticlerical tradition in Italy, but they had never been mass movements with a large popular following. However, once World War I had polarized Italian society, mass politics burst onto the scene with alternative visions of statehood, from the both the left and right.

In the context of an unprecedented series of strikes and occupations in the northern industrial cities, Gramsci gave the intellectual lead to a distinctive form of factory-based "council communism." Inspired by the Russian Revolution and the soviets, he pictured the factories as the basis of a new state led by the workers. The subsequent failure of this project was followed by the formation of the Italian Communist Party in 1921, based on Lenin's model of the vanguard with the purpose of confronting the state and actively guiding workers to revolution.

But the "revolution" eventually came from the right. Italian nationalism had been a vociferous voice in Italian politics for some time, characterized by an antiliberal and antisocialist message. Figures such as Enrico Corradini and, later, Alfredo Rocco had fulminated vociferously against Italy's low status in the world. But nationalism was effectively reconfigured in the early 1920s in the form of Mussolini's fascism. An unstable and eclectic political ideology, fascism drew from various strands of political thinking—such as nationalism and revolutionary syndicalism—to produce an aggressive, antidemocratic, and often irrationalistic nationalism. Although

its emphases varied over time, fascism offered a robust and violent image of national solidarity based on a model drawn from the experience of the wartime trenches.

Although often derided for their eclecticism and anti-intellectualism, certain fascists nevertheless aspired to offer a coherent political theory with an independent vision of the state. The fascist “totalitarian” state was conceived as unifying all classes and sectors of society in a hierarchical organization, given concrete form through “corporations,” culminating in the dictatorship by the leader. Although in reality this vision was achieved only unevenly, it was given notable theoretical support by Giovanni Gentile, a conservative idealist philosopher and onetime collaborator with Croce. Fascism seemed to fulfill the logic of Gentile’s brand of “actual idealism,” an extreme subjectivism that emphasized the creative unity of thought and action and its culmination in an “organic” conception of the state. Gentile was the ghost writer of parts of Mussolini’s “The Doctrine of Fascism” in 1932 and wrote his own *The Origins and Doctrine of Fascism* in 1934. For his open endorsement of the regime, however, he was assassinated by antifascist partisans.

Mussolini’s dictatorship silenced most political opposition. But in the 1920s and 1930s, antifascism was itself a source of innovation in political thought. Conscious of the past failure of liberalism to win the support of wider social constituencies, liberals and socialists sought out new combinations. Carlo Rosselli, for example, wrote his *Liberal Socialism* while imprisoned by the fascists in 1929. For Rosselli, once excised of its Marxist class-centrism and reconciled to parliamentary democracy, socialism could be conceived as an extension of liberty to all. A similar effort was given more philosophical treatment in the essays on *liberalsocialismo* by Guido Calogero and Aldo Capitini in the 1940s. For them, the elision of the two terms underscored a philosophical identity that might serve as the basis for a new, postfascist state. Such ideas were popular among the intellectuals who populated the antifascist *Partito d’Azione* (Action Party) in the 1930s and 1940s, but they had little impact on the wider population who, after the defeat of fascism and the end of World War II, rallied to the mass parties led by Catholics and communists.

The Postwar Republic

The international divisions of the Cold War dominated much of Italy's postwar politics up until the early 1990s, and this reflected, undoubtedly, in the preoccupations of political theory. Despite Italy's reconstitution as a "democratic Republic," the deep ideological conflict between its dominant parties, the Christian Democrats and the Communists, appeared to affirm a continuing, underlying antiliberal orientation to political debate. Indeed, liberalism remained largely on the margins, both intellectually and politically in the early postwar decades. Nevertheless, by the end of the Cold War in 1989, the values of individual liberty, pluralism, and democracy were relatively well entrenched throughout society, if imperfectly achieved.

Postwar Italian Marxism provided a rich seam of ideas that influenced much of the European left. The publication of Gramsci's prison writings from the late 1940s onward offered a whole vocabulary to radical politics centered on his use of the term *hegemony*. Adapted, somewhat selectively, by the leaders of the Communist Party, Gramsci's work provided a distinctive, if ambiguous, slant to the revolutionary creed of Marxism-Leninism. Gramsci's theory of hegemony recommended the gradual, cultural ascendancy of the proletariat rather than exclusively violent revolution. The Communist Party took this to imply an "Italian road" to socialism, which legitimated the use of parliamentary institutions, at least in the short term, to achieve "structural reforms." But by the late 1960s and 1970s, the stodgy, pragmatic Hegelianism of the Communists was challenged by an explosion of new ideas on the far left. Libertarian social movements—from radical feminism, to gay rights, to "autonomist" communists—questioned the capacity of a Gramscian politics either genuinely to transform society or to mediate the left's increased diversity without authoritarian implications. When this radical effervescence descended into political violence, the communists were brought ever closer to endorsing liberal democratic values.

Indeed, Italy's foremost postwar political philosopher, Norberto Bobbio, had questioned the relevance of the Italian revolutionary tradition from the 1950s. Influenced by the prewar liberal socialist tradition, this legal scholar

was willing, unlike other Cold War liberals, openly to engage communists and challenge them to rethink their seemingly “duplicitous” approach to democratic institutions. For him, Marxist-inspired socialism could not of itself guarantee individual freedom and plurality. In a series of works, such as *Which Socialism?* and *Democracy and Dictatorship*, he defended liberal democracy as the best framework for ensuring a space of civil dialogue free from the excessive politicization of public life that characterized Italy’s “republic of parties.” This point was as much a critique of Italy’s Christian Democrat dominated governments as it was of the dangers of communism. By the end of the Cold War, the Italian left had largely heeded Bobbio’s lesson, distanced themselves from the Soviet Union, and embraced liberal democracy.

Postwar Italy remained without a strong, moderate, and secular conservative party. Instead, communism was faced by an influential tradition of Catholic thought. Profoundly anticommunist, the formal Church had offered a spiritual and organizational alternative to Marxism after the collapse of the fascist state. But lay Catholic political ideas ranged across the spectrum from left to right, although often with a critical eye on the character of modern, consumer society. The conservative philosopher Augusto del Noce, for example, inveighed against modern secularism and rationalism, conceived as detrimental to a properly moral outlook. For del Noce, the atheism of the Enlightenment led directly to modern “nihilism,” and he predicted, correctly, the eventual demise of the Soviet Union. Others, however, such as the Dominican and politician Giorgio La Pira, understood Catholicism to have much more in common with communism in its critique of the atomism of modern society.

In the wider society, the influence of Catholic teachings concerning the family and morality steadily decreased (with the Church’s defeat in the 1974 Divorce referendum, a major signal of changing attitudes). But, with the Christian Democrats occupying office for more than 40 years, the anticommunist wing of Catholicism tended to hold greater sway. That is, until the collapse of communism and, in the early 1990s, the public exposure of an enormous scale of corruption among Italian politicians, which destroyed the Christian Democrats’ electoral base.

The eventual exhaustion of postwar ideological divisions encouraged political thinkers to explore new concerns and wider horizons. Themes such as multiculturalism, the environment, globalization, terrorism, and human rights now take center stage in contemporary public debates and in political theory.

Postmodern thought has challenged the metaphysical hierarchies of philosophy and society from a broadly libertarian perspective. For instance, in the 1980s, the Nietzschean philosopher Gianni Vattimo provided a positive endorsement of the so-called postmodern condition based on what he called the principle of “Weak Thought” (*pensiero debole*) shared by a growing number of philosophers in the West. This antifoundationalist outlook, which paralleled the thought of Jacques Derrida or Richard Rorty, rejected the search for an ultimate or fixed criterion of truth in favor of greater dialogue among different interpretations of the world. For Vattimo, such a view supported a democratic politics oriented toward the emancipation of social groups oppressed by cultural and political dogma.

Similarly, French poststructuralist philosophy has been widely influential in Italy and underpinned the contributions to political theory of figures such as ex-autonomist Antonio Negri who—along with his American coauthor, Michael Hardt—published two widely read works of the twenty-first century, *Empire* and *Multitude*. Moving from a broadly Marxist position, and developing Foucault’s ideas concerning “bio-power,” the authors saw in the globalization of neoliberalism and the incorporation of everyday life into its purview, new opportunities for anticapitalist solidarity and collective resistance. Foucauldian themes concerning the governance of human life were also central to the work of philosophers such as Roberto Esposito and Giorgio Agamben. Agamben’s influential books, *Homo Sacer* and *State of Exception*, introduced into political philosophy the concept of “bare life” to describe what he regarded as the growing tendency of sovereign states to reduce the legal status of certain troublesome citizens.

These concerns with the wider global dimensions of political thought were also reflected in the work of critical liberal thinkers such as Danilo Zolo. Similar to Bobbio, Zolo has interrogated the meaning and practice of democracy today, on both national and international scales. In *Cosmopolis*,

for example, he cast a critical eye on the conceits of “humanitarian” principles and dreams of “global government” that began to circulate in the 1990s. In response to these ideas—and in keeping with a critical tradition of Italian political thought examined above—he underscored the inevitable plurality and potential for conflict that characterizes the international system.

James Martin

See also [Croce, Benedetto](#); [Fascism](#); [Garibaldi, Giuseppe](#); [Gramsci, Antonio](#); [Labriola, Antonio](#)

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Japanese Political Thought

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Japanese Political Thought

Modern Japanese political thought has evolved out of premodern intellectual traditions, initially derived largely from Chinese classical sources, and then in turn fundamentally revised during a protracted process of renegotiation as indigenous concepts. Since the mid-nineteenth century, this process has come to be further augmented through interaction with influences from abroad—particularly Europe and North America. As a consequence, modern Japanese political thought is a complex amalgam emerging from the matrix of these varied influences.

The Tokugawa Legacy

From 1603 until 1868, Japan was ruled through the Tokugawa Shogunate, a clan-based military dictatorship that established an unshakeable hold on power through the fixing of caste status, ranking of clans according to allegiance, and a system of “compulsory attendance” in Edo (later renamed Tokyo). Profoundly linked to this system was an imposition of ideological orthodoxy—a Japanese adaptation of Chu Hsi Neo-Confucianism (*Shushigaku*), which consisted of an intellectualized exposition of the existing social and political structure in terms of immutable principles and relations. The country was formally isolated from 1641 onward with only one closely guarded trading port established in Nagasaki for the Dutch and Chinese.

From the mid-eighteenth century onward, largely as a result of intensifying social and economic crises, increasingly open dissent toward this orthodoxy emerged, drawing from either the more proactive Confucian doctrine of Wang Yang-ming (*Yomeigaku*) or the new school of “nativist” intellectual enquiry broadly referred to as “National Learning” (*Kokugaku*), which itself sprang from an earlier phase of academic engagement with ancient literary texts such as *The Record of Ancient Matters* (*Kojiki*, 712 CE).

By the 1830s, political dissent became more intense as the great famines of the Tempo era were regarded as signifiers of the culpability of the Tokugawa regime for contemporary social ills. The arrival of the U.S. Navy’s “black ships” under Commodore Matthew Perry in 1853, and the ensuing capitulation to demands for the opening up of trade, is generally regarded as the pivotal moment that gave urgency to the question of fundamentally redefining the intellectual foundations of legitimate political rule.

The Meiji Restoration

“Restore the Emperor and Expel the Barbarian” was the rallying slogan for critics of the Tokugawa regime, but the political thought informing these aims was diverse. The current of political thought that would ultimately inspire the Meiji Restoration of 1868 grew from the aforementioned schools, particularly *Yomeigaku* and *Kokugaku*.

Yoshida Shoin was arguably the most distinctive thinker to distill these disparate elements of thought into one manifesto. His concept of a unitary citizenship subject directly to the Emperor (*Ikkun Banmin-ron*), coupled with a program of active insurgence that included using nonsamurai militias, was a decisive break with the essentially caste-riven structure of the Tokugawa state. His academy in the Choshu domain was to produce several leaders of the Restoration.

The Restoration of Imperial rule in 1868 ushered in an era of profound political change. Although ostensibly aimed at fulfilling the goal of restoring the Emperor and expelling foreign influence, the new government, led by a coalition of court officials and lower ranking samurai (primarily

from the Satsuma and Choshu clans), proceeded to disestablish the former clan domain and caste system, while adopting Western models of reform and development for key areas of national infrastructure.

After the return of a government mission to the United States and Europe in 1873 (the Iwakura Mission), a program of national “enlightenment” was promoted through the press and the arts. Often referred to as the Meiji Enlightenment, this is primarily associated with the Meiji Six Society, which was established by Mori Arinori (later to become the first Education Minister) and joined by a number of luminaries, including Fukuzawa Yukichi, who was a prominent popularizer of Western learning and civilization and eventually founded Keio Gijuku University.

The success of this movement in reorienting popular conceptions of political discourse is contestable; however, from the 1870s onward, Western political theorists, from Thomas Hobbes, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Montesquieu to Jeremy Bentham, J. S. Mill, and Herbert Spencer, came to be translated and disseminated widely among the intelligentsia.

Toward Representative Government

After the unsuccessful Seinan Rebellion in 1877, where the government quelled the last vestiges of armed resistance led by the former samurai caste, political conflict transferred to the arena of agitation for representative government. Accordingly, the full array of Western liberal democratic thought was invoked to support claims for a new form of constitutional government; this is commonly referred to as the Freedom and People’s Rights Movement. After protracted activism and suppression, the government finally acquiesced in 1881 and promised to consult and draft a new constitution within the decade.

The Freedom and People’s Rights Movement continued to be active throughout the 1880s with figures such as Hoshi Toru and Tokutomi Soho making particularly effective use of mass-produced broadsheet newspapers on the Western model. However, this period was also characterized by increasing conflict with neighboring governments in Korea and China, with intensified chafing at the perpetuation of “unequal” treaty provisions with

the Western powers, particularly the loss of jurisdiction over foreign miscreants (viz. the extraterritoriality provision).

The Meiji Constitution came into effect in 1890 and ushered in a series of disruptive elections and stalemated parliaments. Slowly the practice of managing elected assemblies and coordinating cabinets appointed directly by the Emperor became more stable. The increasing likelihood of armed conflict with China also served to galvanize the public in support of a united system of government.

The Reemergence of Nativist Political Discourse

By the late 1880s, a new school of “nativist” thought began to emerge that started to question the applicability of Western political models to Japanese society and culture. Intellectual journalists such as Miyake Setsurei and Kuga Katsunan were particularly significant in reemphasizing indigenous cultural traditions, including Buddhism, in publications such as *Japan* and *The Japanese*. They promoted the concept of the “national essence” (*kokusui*), and their political commentary became a key precursor to the emergence of a form of particularized nationalism based on the nation’s unique polity (*kokutai*).

At the same time as the Constitution came into effect, the Imperial Rescript on Education was promulgated; it articulated an official view of the essentially Confucian aims of education, particularly as they related to fostering piety toward parents within the family, and loyalty toward the Emperor within the state. This signified a reintroduction of the key motifs of classical Confucian thought as an ideological underpinning to Imperial sovereignty. The document became the focus of debate as scholars sympathetic to Christianity, or at least a secular view of the state, clashed with advocates of an interpretation based on a distinctive Japanese spirituality. Advocates for the Rescript included established academics such as Inoue Enryō and Inoue Tetsuro, who wrote a famous treatise in defense of the document. Ultimately the Rescript became a key vehicle for ensuring the indoctrination of citizens toward loyalty to the state.

After the victories over China in 1895 and imperial Russia in 1905, “nativist” and nationalistic discourse became more pronounced. At the same time, however, the emergence of a new urbanized working class and a left-wing intelligentsia inspired by Marxist writings came to be a more significant factor in national politics.

Taisho Democracy

The Emperor Meiji was succeeded by the Emperor Taisho in 1912. The Taisho era (1912–26) was a culturally vibrant but politically turbulent epoch. Although on the side of the victors in World War I, Japan did not enjoy stability and prosperity. The postwar period saw the emergence of a new wave of political activism, and broad-based urban protest led to the revision of the Constitution.

The liberal intelligentsia, led by figures such as Yoshino Sakuzo, enjoyed considerable influence during this period, and in 1918, Hara Kei of the *Seiyukai* party became the first Prime Minister to accede to the post from within a popularly elected party as opposed to being an appointee of the Emperor. Impetus toward expanding the electoral franchise culminated in the passing of the Universal Manhood Suffrage Law in 1925. Nonetheless, civil unrest continued unabated, and the Tokyo earthquake of 1923 had a decisively devastating effect on the national economy and public morale.

Socialism was to chart an unusual course of development from this time onward. On the one hand, figures such as Osugi Sakae propagated a radical and doctrinaire anarchism that made him a regular target of official repression. By contrast, Kita Ikki endeavored to weave notions of the national polity with socialism, producing an idiosyncratic fusion that was to lead him to support unqualified authority of the Emperor in his *Outline of a Plan for Reorganizing Japan* (1919). His writings were regarded as essential reading in the 1930s by ultranationalists.

Feminism also held some currency in political thought as the “Blue Stockings” led by Hiratsuka Raicho agitated for women’s political rights. More radical feminists such as Ito Noe also emerged and gained notoriety

for their indifference to patriarchal conventions within contemporary society.

As evidence of the degree to which intellectual orientations could be transformed, Tokutomi Soho, the former advocate of Western liberalism, promoted the concept of an Asiatic Monroe Doctrine and, along with a number of other influential contemporary commentators, began to promote a form of Pan-Asianism that placed Japan at the center of deciding Asia's future.

Ambivalence toward Western ideas and culture found a more sophisticated expression among a solid core of philosophers who engaged in a rigorous exercise of reflection, critique, and synthesis, producing the work that ultimately came to be grouped together as the Kyoto school. Key influences were predominantly from Germany or, as in the case of Nishida Kitaro, a combination of Germanic phenomenology and American pragmatism. Watsuji Tetsuro also produced some of the more idiosyncratic but accessible works. Watsuji critically engaged with the philosophy of Martin Heidegger to develop a distinctive concept of the subject (the "contextual"), which he contrasted with Western rationalist conceptions of the individual. In 1935, he published a still widely cited work *Climate and Culture (Fudo)*, which explored the relations among society, culture, and climate.

The Collapse of Civilian Government

The Great Depression was arguably the catalyst that ultimately engendered the collapse of civil government in the face of a strident military that found increasing support among a public disillusioned with parliamentary politics. Marxist intellectuals were initially vocal in their condemnation of the rising tide of militant nationalism, and there were cases of prominent academics at the Imperial universities who refused to bow to pressure from ultranationalists.

Eventually, however, political censorship prevailed. From 1932, only one official socialist party, the Social Masses Party under Abe Iso, was recognized by the government, with all other left-wing political organizations suppressed. In 1935, Minobe Tachikichi, the Professor of

Constitutional Law at Tokyo Imperial University, was forced out of his post for his longstanding theory of the Emperor as “an organ of government”—a view that was regarded as treasonous by advocates of interpretations based on “the unique national polity.”

After the army’s annexation of Manchuria in 1931, the military became increasingly emboldened in its intervention in political life. On May 15, 1932, after an earlier attack on leading government and business figures by a self-styled “Blood-Pledge Corps,” a group including naval officers assassinated the then Prime Minister, Inukai Tsuyoshi. On February 26, 1936, there was a revolt led by young officers of the Imperial Army in the name of the Emperor, providing a further emphatic indication that civilian government was in a serious predicament.

Full-scale war with China commenced in 1937 through the Marco Polo Bridge Incident. Japan joined the Axis powers in 1940, and preparations for expansionist military operations continued. In 1940, all political parties were dissolved and subsumed within the Imperial Rule Assistance Association.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Japan was fully at war in the Pacific against the Allies and embarked on the creation of a Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere. The expansion of the Empire was portrayed as a war of liberation for “all Asians,” albeit within a structure of suzerainty to the Japanese homeland. The ideological basis for this program drew emphatically on the tradition of Pan-Asianism first developed in the earlier part of the century.

Internally, the Japanese population was subjected to more emphatic ideological demands to make sacrifices for the nation on the basis of an obligation to protect the sanctity of the Emperor. Since 1937, Ministry of Education publications such as *Kokutai no Hongi* (“The Principles of Our National Polity”) were employed to outline a distinctively non-Western premise of Japanese political rule that was embedded in the divine authority of the Emperor.

Defeat and National Reconstruction

Japan's postwar political development was profoundly conditioned by the harsh reality of unconditional surrender and occupation under the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), General Douglas MacArthur. In tandem with the wholesale replacement of the Meiji Constitution with a new "made-to-purpose" Constitution, including the famous ninth article renouncing the right to wage war, SCAP set about reconstructing the infrastructure of government, business, and education to facilitate the "democratization" of the former enemy.

The electoral franchise was expanded to include female voters, and labor laws were reworked to permit unionization. The former super-conglomerates of the business world (*Zaibatsu*) were forcibly dismantled. Political association was also freed from proscription, and in a controversial move, Emperor Hirohito was coopted to support the new government, not as a living god, but as a constitutionally "symbolic" monarch.

Postwar Political Thought

Within this context, Marxist thought reemerged from its earlier era of proscription with renewed vigor, albeit not without internal contradictions. The reactivated political parties of the left, the Japan Communist Party (JCP) and the highly factionalized Japan Socialist Party (JSP), contained persons who had been imprisoned during the war alongside those who had cooperated with the ultranationalist government. The point of common interest for Marxist collaborators lay in a rejection of Western "modernity," which they were happy to repudiate in as strident terms as the advocates of national purity (regarding it as synonymous with capitalism). In the immediate postwar period, "democratization" was accepted only in the limited sense of being a necessary transitional stage toward full Communism. Consequently, there was an uneasy relation between intellectuals who fronted for Marxist political parties and those who advocated non-Marxist lines of democratic reform.

This political outlook took on an added intensity with the Chinese Revolution in 1949. Left-wing intellectuals such as Takeuchi Yoshimi could see evidence of an Asian alternative to Western "modernity" that renewed determination to resist Western prescription for political reform. The

Communist revolution in China engendered a profound rethinking of the policy of democratization in Japan by SCAP as the more radical elements within the left who aligned with either the Soviet Union or Communist China became perceived as a potential threat to future political stability.

During this same period, Maruyama Masao emerged as one of the most significant scholars of modern Japanese intellectual and political development, and he was particularly criticized by the left-wing intelligentsia for considering “modernization” in non-Marxist terms. One of Maruyama’s key concerns was the failure of Japan to experience “modernity” in the Western sense, however one might conceive it. Steeped in a thorough knowledge of premodern traditions, he set about developing a rational explanation of the key mechanisms of domination and subjugation that had emerged since the Meiji Restoration, evoking his famous reference to a “community of fate” to describe a condition where there was no core belief system; there were only concentric circles of responsibility, and none within the circles felt they had any control. His writing on this subject was translated into English in 1963 under the title *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics*.

Even so, postwar political thought was for several decades dominated by a schism between the left-wing intelligentsia, who maintained a sustained Marxist critique of Japanese history and the contemporary political system based on the concept of the “Emperor System,” and a rump of intellectuals who were either apologists for the past and present or simply held views that could not be easily categorized. However, in 1955, Hatoyama Ichiro, who had been freed from previous restrictions on political participation, began forging a new coalition of conservative political interests, resulting eventually in the consolidation of both the Liberal and Progressive parties into the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). This new force in Japanese politics was to form the basis of what, in effect, was a one-party rule for the next 38 years.

From 1955 on, the JCP and JSP had fluctuating success with the Japanese electorate. Miyamoto Kenji had extraordinary longevity as leader of the JCP (until 1977), but issues such as pollution, the “Emperor-system,” and the continued accommodation of the American military in Okinawa, rather

than Marxist doctrine per se, provided these political parties with a platform to garner protest votes when failure of the LDP became particularly pronounced. One other area where political debate remained focused concerned the official vetting of history textbooks for schools. Ienaga Saburo famously went to court to have his Ministry of Education–commissioned textbook published as written, without alteration to the commentary on the invasion of China and the role of the Emperor. These have remained highly contentious issues to the present.

The Rise of “Japan Inc.”

The basis for the stability of LDP rule stemmed from a focus on the effective managerialization of the economy that entailed prioritizing the efficient coordination of all resources (including labor, materials, and energy requirements) for the unimpeded expansion of manufacture and export. The Ministry of International Trade and Industry became synonymous with the perception of Japan as a nation organized for business (“Japan Inc.”).

An important support for this approach was provided through a rigorous national system of educational assessment that was crowned by the best national and private universities, and ultimately led to the best employment, often for life. Although ostensibly a meritocratic device, the system of entrance exams became associated with the social issue of “exam hell.” It did, nonetheless, contribute substantially to the perception that success could be found through hard work and study.

If there were ideological differences to be resolved within the LDP, they tended to revolve around the protection of domestic manufacture and food security versus the option of integrating Japan more thoroughly within the world economy and opening the still relatively highly integrated system of state-owned corporations to the possibility of privatization and/or deregulation. Although these issues in Western democracies might well engender two disparate political parties, a system of two major political parties alternating in power did not emerge in Japan for almost four decades.

In the 1980s, Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro was arguably the most decisive figure in pulling Japan in the direction of the more globalized policy perspective, and he had significant success in breaking up and privatizing both NTT and Japan Rail. Even so, the tendency to return to protectionism or centralized coordination for key infrastructure never entirely disappeared. This led commentators to develop particularist accounts for Japan's success, occasionally characterized by optimism (e.g., Ezra Vogel, *Japan as Number One*) or anxiety (e.g., Karel van Wolferen, *The Enigma of Japanese Power*).

Japan and Neoliberalism

After the bursting of the so-called “bubble economy” in 1991, it was broadly expected that the last vestiges of domestic protectionism, state-funded infrastructure development and overregulation, would be swept away. This is not entirely what followed.

In 1993, the LDP lost power for the first time since 1955 after the defection of key factions within the party to a new coalition of opposition parties led by Hosokawa Morihiro. After Hosokawa's brief stay in power, the 1994 election produced a surprising coalition of the LDP with their former arch-enemies the JSP. Murayama Tomiichi of the JSP was appointed Prime Minister, but the LDP held the remaining significant policy portfolios.

This short-lived arrangement was replaced by a reinvigorated LDP in 1996 under Hashimoto Ryutaro, who committed to deliver on a promise of initiating a “big bang” of reform within the Japanese system—essentially a more thorough implementation of a neo-liberal program of “small government” and deregulation. This met with political stonewalling and obstruction within the party, and Hashimoto was eventually replaced by Obuchi Keizo, who returned to an “old school” consensus approach that carried out piecemeal reform of the financial sector to deal with the residual issue of bad debt lingering from the financial crisis of 1991. Overall, Obuchi enjoyed success on several fronts but died in office in 2000, leaving an unexpected political vacuum.

The government of Prime Minister Mori, Obuchi's successor, limped through its term until Koizumi Junichiro challenged and won the leadership of the LDP. He secured a relatively sustained term of office (2001–06) and succeeded in pushing through the partial privatization and deregulation of various operations within Japan Post.

The ultimate result of the Koizumi reforms from an ideological point of view is not altogether clear. His legacy with regard to the LDP was to dismantle the structure of high interdependence among party, bureaucracy, and business, and its system of clanlike factions. The idiosyncratic leadership style did not translate into a political platform that others could run with.

Within two years of Koizumi's resignation, the relatively recently emergent Democratic Party of Japan formed a new government that emphatically demonstrated the willingness of the electorate to reject the LDP and install an alternative government. Even so, the ideological platform of this party is still in a relatively formative stage, and clear tenets of distinction have yet to emerge.

Re-emergent Nationalism

Since Prime Minister Hosokawa's unprecedented apology to the victims of Japan's aggression in World War II in 1993, followed by an even more emphatic apology from Prime Minister Murayama in 1995, the issue of Japan's wartime responsibilities reignited a broader debate about Japanese patriotism. In 1996, an association of revisionist academics (*Atarashii Rekishi Kyokasho wo Tsukuru Kai*) promoted a new textbook for junior high schools that would rewrite the "masochistic" version of Japan's wartime conduct. This included an avoidance of the characterization of Japan's war with China as an act of unilateral aggression and a questioning of the reliability of reports about the Rape of Nanking.

Even Obuchi engaged in the politically contentious issue of requiring schools to raise the national flag and sing the national anthem. These ceremonies were regarded with hostility by left-wing-aligned educators

who associated them with the Emperor system. The legislation was passed in 1999 and became official policy.

Koizumi was also noted for his persistent visits to the Yasukuni Shrine to show respect for the war dead, which infuriated Chinese observers because the Shrine included the interned remains of “Class A” war criminals. This nonetheless proved to be popular with the electorate and built a reemergent sense of nationalism.

Conclusion

The emergence of Japan as a leading manufacturing and financial power from the 1980s did a great deal to take the heat out of earlier ideological conflicts between the traditional left and right, and it has become possible for historical analysis and political commentary to free itself gradually from the earlier binaries. Nonetheless, the earlier certitudes of national policy management have largely evaporated so that Japan finds itself in the midst of a policy vacuum. The recent Tohoku Disaster of 2011 has exacerbated this condition.

Alistair Swale

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Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826) was the third president of the United States, a political theorist, and a representative of Enlightenment thought. Jefferson was born in Albemarle County, Virginia. He graduated from the College of William and Mary in 1762, studied law under George Wythe, and was admitted to the Virginia bar in 1767. After he entered the House of Burgesses in 1769, public affairs increasingly occupied his time, and he soon became a leading opponent of British oppression of the colonies. *A Summary View of the Rights of British America* (1774), *Declaration of the Causes and Necessity for Taking up Arms* (1775), and the *Declaration of Independence* (1776), all drafted by Jefferson, made him the major penman of the American Revolution. In 1776, he left the Continental Congress to lead in reforming the laws of Virginia, drafting, among other measures, the famous bill for establishing religious freedom. He served as governor of Virginia from 1779 to 1781, retired for two years during his wife's fatal illness, returned to Congress, helped to draft the Northwest Ordinance, and went to France, where, in 1785, he succeeded Benjamin Franklin as American minister. He delighted in French culture and conversed with the Marquis de Lafayette and other enlightened Frenchmen about limiting the despotism of the *ancien regime*. He returned to America in 1789 a warm advocate of Franco-American friendship and in 1790 became secretary of state in George Washington's first cabinet. With James Madison, he soon led the opposition against the Federalist Party and the economic plans of Alexander Hamilton as well as the spread of British influence in American

councils. He resigned in 1793, but during three years of “retirement,” he remained politically active—especially in denouncing John Jay’s treaty with England, intended to prevent war and promote trade. Elected Vice President in 1797, he bitterly opposed the quasi-war with France and the Alien and Sedition Laws, and he wrote the Kentucky Resolutions affirming the right of the states to declare void federal laws they deemed unconstitutional. His election as president in 1801 ended Federalist domination of the federal government. The restriction of the scope of the federal government, the purchase of Louisiana (1803), the failure of reconciliation efforts with England (1807), and the embargo of British goods (1807–08) marked his administrations. He retired to Monticello in 1809, devoting his remaining years to study, farming, a wide correspondence, and the founding of the University of Virginia.

Philosophical Views

Jefferson stands with Franklin as the supreme embodiment of the Enlightenment in the United States. His “immortals” were Francis Bacon, Isaac Newton, and John Locke, each representing a major aspect of his philosophy. He accepted Bacon’s empiricism and emphasis on the role of reason in improving society. From Newton he acquired his view that the universe was harmonious, governed by law, and amenable to human investigation. Locke enunciated the political implications of these viewpoints and was, for Jefferson, the preeminent philosophical guide. The empirical epistemology of *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* and the insistence on government by consent in the *Second Treatise of Government* undergirded all of Jefferson’s thought. Although he read and admired other philosophers of the Age of Reason, especially the French physiocrats, he remained firmly within the English tradition.

The ideal of a republic of pastoral yeomen colored Jefferson’s vision for the new nation and infused his every word and deed in the 50 years between 1776 and his death. In Jefferson’s context, the word *pastoral* had far more than a merely agricultural or bucolic meaning. It signified, much more importantly, the moral ideals and lifestyle of the long pastoral tradition in Western thought from Aristotle, Cicero, Virgil, and Horace to Addison and the French physiocrats. Its basic concern was to characterize the good

person and his appropriate relations with his environment and other human beings, rather than to focus on public purposes and programs as national leaders often did. Three years after retiring from the presidency, Jefferson expressed an apt analogy in a comment on gardening and its perennial harvest: “No occupation is so delightful to me as the culture of the earth and no culture comparable to that of the garden” (letter from Jefferson to Charles Willson Peale, 1811).

Jefferson wanted a similar pleasure and harmony to infuse all of life. The pastoral setting, although immensely significant, was only instrumental—one admired the shepherd or the farmer or the country gentleman not ultimately for his economic contribution or his aesthetic sensitivity, but for his moral integrity, self-reliance, personal style, and harmonious social life. Although most Americans likely had little knowledge of the Roman pastoralists, and although Jefferson wrote no systematic pastoral treatise, his writings, and the productions of the American press at all levels, everywhere reflected pastoral values. Jefferson’s critical authorial contribution was to weave these values into virtually every law, every letter, every executive message, and every manifesto for the new nation. The persistence and profundity of these values, translated into public policy, raised Jefferson’s political career from the level of mere dexterity to that of grand conception.

Socializing Good Citizens

This sense of the close relationship between personal qualities and the government appropriate for them caused Jefferson to emphasize local government. Vitality at that level was needed to nourish the skills of judgment, the sense of charity, and the concern for public policy inherent in the good person, and to allow those qualities to have their due weight in the public councils. To a pastoralist, government was not grand, elegant, mysterious, or ambitious. It was close to the people, attuned to the needs of their daily lives. The whole was *not* greater than the sum of the parts, as might seem to be the case from Rome or Versailles or St. Petersburg or Constantinople or Peking. In fact, to resist that presumption was a cardinal reason for emphasizing towns, counties, and states rather than nations or empires. Under this conception, a national government might undertake

rather large enterprises—found a national university, construct internal improvements, or even purchase Louisiana, as examples—but only upon impulses coming from the grassroots. Furthermore, the government had to be, in a favorite Jeffersonian word, “mild.” That is, it should not be heavy- or high-handed; its officers were not to be imperious, or arrogant, nor its modes elegant or expensive. Its attitude was to be that of a servant of the people. Thus, when Jefferson said “that government is best which governs least,” he meant primarily that his good citizen had qualities that make lordly bureaucracies and proconsuls not only unnecessary but also actually dangerous. The dictum applied principally to the federal level of government, farthest from the people, presumably less sensitive to their needs and, in the eighteenth century at any rate, least capable of fulfilling legitimate public ends.

In thus defining the nature of government Jefferson did not at all intend to create a laissez-faire, atomistic, survival-of-the-fittest society like that espoused by Social Darwinists a century later. To him, social harmony and the value of human accord were supremely important. Although Jefferson had contempt for many traditional institutions such as the remnants of feudalism, authoritarian churches, secret societies, and military brotherhoods, he was not, in either the Romantic or Darwinian modes, a rugged individualist who idolized Man Standing Alone; rather, Jefferson epitomized Man Organizing. Although the often lonely life of the yeoman farmer might be a vital source of the self-reliance Jefferson so admired, the useful man thus brought into being found his fulfillment *in society*, contributing to the general welfare and discharging the obligations of citizenship—in the rich Aristotelian sense of the word, which was always Jefferson’s context for it.

Educating Good Citizens

The most important social institutions for Jefferson were educational. His concern for the discipline and courses of study for young children, as well as for the reading and learning necessary for the potential leaders of the republic, was incessant and lifelong. Following Locke, Jefferson believed that human beings were liable to almost infinite influence by their experience of life; therefore, if they were to be *good* people, their education

was supremely important. In addition to thus forming virtuous individuals, education would furnish ordinary citizens with the skills they needed to fulfill their responsibilities in self-government and to conduct their own affairs efficiently and prosperously. The education of ordinary citizens was not intended to qualify them to run the government; rather, it would politically enlighten them to the degree that they could choose the best leaders—the “natural aristocrats”—and then hold them accountable for their actions.

Jefferson considered the University of Virginia to be in a way a substitute for a national university that Congress showed little sign of patronizing, despite the urging of every president from Washington to John Quincy Adams. Resting on a system of primary and secondary schools, the University would educate Jefferson’s cherished “aristocracy of talent and virtue” in a way different from the usual modes. Although the ancient languages and other traditional bases of education would be retained, Jefferson wanted modern languages and all the newest fields of science to be taught as equally important branches of knowledge, entirely free from the superstitions, restraints, and degradations long imposed on them. “Everyone knows,” he wrote in 1805, “that Oxford, Cambridge, the Sorbonne, etc., are a century or two behind the sciences of the age” (January 5, 1805, letter to Littleton Waller Tazewell). Finally, the founder of the University of Virginia wanted his future statesmen trained in the theory and practice of republican government. Nothing less than this transforming process, supported by the public from primary school through the university, would sufficiently encourage the virtue, and the changes in character, necessary to make self-government work. In urging the state of Virginia to support the university, Jefferson scorned “the discouraging persuasion that a man is fixed, by a law of his nature, at a given point; that his improvement is a chimera, and the hope delusive of rendering ourselves wiser, happier, or better than our forefathers were” (Report of the Commissioners for the University of Virginia). Rather, it was his faith that knowledge was cumulative over generations. In Jefferson’s thought, more clearly than in that of any other American, the connection is firmly made between Enlightenment aspirations for humankind and the hoped-for character of the new nation. The links were to be schools at every level.

Jefferson also promoted an array of institutions for human enlightenment beyond those properly called schools. He served for nearly 20 years as president of the American Philosophical Society, which he conceived as an American version of the Royal Society or the French Academy, promoting and disseminating scientific and technical discoveries that would improve the life of humankind. He was a founder of the Albemarle Agricultural Society, which he hoped would be a model for such societies spreading useful information for farmers across the countryside. They would also further nourish the skills of self-help and neighborly cooperation that Jefferson incessantly espoused. Although a slave owner himself, he encouraged state and national organizations to abolish slavery, improve life for Native Americans, promote the arts, and stimulate trade. He approved, too, the growth of “rational” religious institutions he hoped would soon replace the bigoted, superstitious churches he thought degraded humankind.

The Occupations of Good Citizens

The third foundation for good character, after vital local government and “improving institutions,” Jefferson placed in one’s occupation. The habits and attitudes inculcated as one pursued daily tasks, Jefferson believed, would have a decisive effect on character. A slave, beaten into submission, never allowed to think for himself, and accustomed to seeing the fruits of his labor enjoyed by others, would be dull, sullen, and irresponsible. A master of slaves would be even more morally reprehensible—he would become overbearing, brutish, arrogant, tyrannical, and dependent on the work of others. Merchants operated under quite different, but morally almost as unpropitious, circumstances. Since they made a living by buying cheap and selling dear, they were exposed to the temptation to secure by fraud and dispose by misrepresentation. To stay in business, they often had to lie and cheat, and even under the best of circumstances, they were in danger of being wiped out by the vagaries of a market beyond their control. Overall, their attention focused predominantly on money. A factory operative, deadened by long hours of labor in damp, filthy places and trained to be an “appendage of a machine,” was also unlikely to become a self-reliant citizen. The mobs that roamed the streets of Rome or London or Paris were entirely unfitted by their habits of idleness, beggary, and theft to be good self-governing citizens. The life of the barracks, the march, and the

battlefield were also bereft of ennobling civic influences for either officers or men in the ranks. Although Jefferson's disdain for these occupations had significant economic foundations, he took his stand against them primarily because they did not sustain the necessary moral qualities and, therefore, did not yield the habits of the good life and of republican citizenship that were Jefferson's *summum bonum*.

Left, of course, was the life of the yeoman farmer, rhapsodized by Jefferson in his famous tribute to husbandmen, "the chosen people of God." They were, he declared, the "peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue, . . . looking to their own soil and industry" for their livelihood. Implicit in the daily round of their lives was a reliance on their own fruitful labor in a healthy environment. On the other hand, Jefferson observed, "Dependence begets subservience and venality, suffocates the germ of virtue, and prepares fit tools for the designs of ambition." These afflictions, Jefferson believed, were far more common in cities than in the countryside. A vibrant republic depends on its grassroots, for "[i]t is the manners and spirit of a people which preserves a republic in vigor. A degeneracy in these is a canker which soon eats to the heart of its laws and constitution" (Jefferson 1784, Query 19).

Jefferson accepted the physiocratic doctrine that only those who labor to produce truly increased the wealth of a nation; his praise of farmers he therefore regarded as economically defensible, and it was politically astute as well in a nation 90 percent composed of farmers and possessed of vast unsettled lands. But it is also evident that he had a primary concern for cultivating the virtues of the good person and the good citizen.

Jefferson's Critics

Despite his iconic status among Americans over two centuries, Jefferson has had his critics. In the election of 1800, pro-Federalist newspapers warned of the dire consequences of an "anarchist" and "atheist" like Jefferson being elected President. Alexander Hamilton regarded Jefferson as naïvely ignorant of the young nation's urgent and continuing need for the national government, aided by a national bank, to stimulate the industrial and commercial growth of the economy. Fellow Virginian slaveowners such

as George Fitzhugh (*Cannibals All!*, 1857) regarded Jefferson as a rabble rouser who had betrayed the cause of his native South and who failed to recognize and appreciate the inherently conservative nature of any healthy society. Small-government anti-Federalists noted that Jefferson's actions in office, notably the Louisiana Purchase, did not always square with his decentralist vision of states' rights and local control. Advocates of racial equality have pointed out the contradiction, which Jefferson shared with other anti-slavery Founders such as George Washington and James Madison, between advocating abolition and continuing to own slaves.

Conclusion

Altogether, Jefferson bespoke a vivid, comprehensive, and revolutionary vision of the nation's character and its future development. He explained what worthy character was, what the distinctive American qualities should be, how these were suited to republican government, what institutions are required, and which occupations are appropriate to the society thus brought into being. Jefferson formed his opinion on constitutional interpretation, foreign policy, civil liberties, political parties, and a host of other questions in terms of their good or bad impact on his vision of the good society.

Jefferson's legacy is perhaps best understood as linked to that of his sometimes friend, sometimes foe Alexander Hamilton. Together, these visionary Founders represent the longstanding polarity of American political thought: small versus big government, popular participation versus elite planning, and rural versus urban virtues. Subsequent thinkers as diverse as Herbert Croly (*The Promise of American Life*, 1909) and Barack Obama (*The Audacity of Hope*, 2006) have sought to combine these contrasting themes into a national synthesis that uses Hamiltonian vigorous government as a means to achieve the Jeffersonian goal of an enlightened and engaged citizenry pursuing the endless opportunities and civic integrity of American life.

Ralph Ketcham

See also [American Political Thought](#); [Constitutionalism](#); [Federalist Papers](#); [Hamilton, Alexander](#); [Republicanism](#); [Washington, George](#)

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Justice

The central meaning of *justice*, as the Oxford English Dictionary notes, is “rendering every man his due,” and being “equitable.” What is distinctive about justice, in contrast to the notion of the morally good, is its focus on respect for the individual and her rights (and sometimes her duties).

Although the notion of the good allows for summing up value across individuals, justice requires that each individual be respected. These are not necessarily in conflict. For example, if A has the choice to save two people, B and C, or one person, D, D may have no right that A save her rather than them. But it is commonly thought that *if* the right and the good do conflict, then justice takes priority. As John Rawls said in the opening of his landmark book, *A Theory of Justice*, “Justice is the first virtue of social institutions, as truth is of systems of thought.” That means that “[e]ach person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override” (Rawls 1971, 3). That said, there are many kinds of justice, and many theories of justice, and both the kinds and the theories are surveyed in this entry.

Kinds of Justice

The first distinction to mark is between procedural justice and substantive justice. Procedural justice concerns the process that is due people before certain major decisions that will seriously affect them are taken. In American legal culture, this is normally referred to by the seemingly

redundant name “procedural due process.” The paradigmatic examples are the protections accorded criminal defendants, such as the right to a jury of one’s peers, the right to counsel, and the right to confront the witnesses against a defendant.

Substantive justice concerns the substantive rights and duties that a person has, such as the right to freedom of speech, or the right a promisee has against a promisor that he or she keep a promise. These are generic rights and duties, and whether a person has a specific right that must be respected, or duty that must be performed, in a particular situation depends on a number of factors. Sorting those factors out is the task of substantive accounts of justice. The remaining discussion in this section will concern itself with those issues. And it will cover the four classic types of substantive justice, as distinguished by Aristotle: justice in rectification, justice in exchange (commutative justice), distributive justice, and political justice.

Rectificatory Justice

Rectificatory justice has two subheads: retributive justice in response to criminal wrongdoing and compensatory justice in response to private law wrongs—torts or breaches of contract.

Retributive justice is based on the thought that when a person has committed a criminal act, he or she deserves to be punished. Strong retributivism holds that a person *should* receive the punishment that he or she deserves, and weak retributivism holds that this person *may* receive the punishment he or she deserves. In either version, a person should receive no more punishment than he or she deserves. How much a person deserves is a function of the severity of the crime and the culpability of the person for having committed it. Empirical research shows that there is general agreement on how to order the severity of crimes and, thus holding culpability constant, how to order the severity of deserved punishments.

Compensatory justice can be conceived under the heading of damages in contract and tort law. The general idea is that the wrongdoer (someone who breaches his or her duty) should make the victim whole. For example, if A

breaches a contract with B, then the expectation measure for damages would require A to give B enough money to put B in the economic position he or she would have been in had A performed his or her part of the contract. Or if A commits a tort against B by, for example, causing personal injury to B, then A would owe B money to compensate for a range of problems, from the cost of medical services, to pain and suffering, to lost earnings.

Commutative Justice

Justice in exchange or commutative justice requires that agreements and exchanges be fair. For example, in the work context, employers must pay fair wages to employees and treat them with respect in the workplace, and employees must do their work conscientiously.

Distributive Justice

Distributive justice concerns the distribution of goods that individuals need to lead good lives. The topic can be divided into four major subtopics: what goods should count when asking whether distributive justice has been achieved; what is the proper measure of a just distribution; by what mechanism should the goods be distributed; and what is the relevant community in which to measure the distribution?

The types of goods that are thought to be relevant for distributive justice include utilitarian measures, such as pleasure, happiness, preference satisfaction, or welfare. They also include what Rawls calls primary goods, namely, those goods, including liberties, that would help a person pursue his or her life plans no matter what they are. And they also include what Amartya Sen calls capabilities, to wit having the opportunity and ability to choose to do, get, or become things that she might value doing, having, or being.

There is a fundamental divide with regard to the proper measure for distributive justice: whether there is some particular distribution that is to be aimed at, or whether the process is all that matters. Robert Nozick famously

argued that if the ownership of property is just at one time, and all transactions from that time forward are just, then whatever distribution results will be just. His target was Rawls, who argued for the “difference principle,” according to which the rules of society should be designed to allow inequalities in goods like income and wealth if and only if those inequalities would benefit the poorest members of society. Nozick’s critique was partly mistaken, insofar as it treated Rawls’s view as if property rights did not depend on process. But it was correct in noting that it would use a particular pattern to design laws so that the expected outcome of free transactions is one in which the worst off are as well off as possible. It is fair to say that most theorists have some pattern in mind in that way. Alternatives to the difference principle include the prioritarian view, according to which the worst off count the most, but their losses can be outweighed by greater gains to others, and the view that after all reach a certain minimal baseline, then the rules should be designed to maximize the average welfare.

Disputes regarding the mechanism to use in achieving distributive justice turn largely on the question of whether the government or private markets should be used to distribute the relevant goods. Certain goods, public goods, cannot be effectively distributed by the market because they are nonrivalrous (one person’s consumption of a good leads to no subtractions from any other individual’s consumption, e.g., national defense) and there is no way to exclude those who have not paid for them from benefiting from them. It is hard to get money in exchange for such goods (public radio and television notwithstanding), and thus, it is hard to have a market for them. But even with regard to goods that the market can effectively produce, the range of ideological views from socialism to free market capitalism covers the spectrum of thought about what sort of role government should have in their production and distribution, from state ownership of the means of production, to regulation of the market, to minimal protection for property rights.

The question of the relevant community concerns who is counted when looking to see whether distributive justice has been achieved. At one end of the spectrum are cosmopolitan thinkers who argue that *all* humans have to be taken into account. One step less inclusive are thinkers like Rawls, who

ask whether members of a particular society (i.e., a group of people organized under one government) have achieved distributive justice. Some federalists will want to allow the question to be made more local still, focusing to some degree on smaller governmental units, like states in the United States, or different countries within the European Union.

One last issue that arises in the context of discussions on distributive justice is whether the accounts should be two level or one level. A two-level account asks how laws should be designed so as to achieve distributive justice, but it does not require individuals to do anything other than support and obey just laws. A one-level account demands that individuals think about how their private choices will affect the distribution of the relevant goods.

Political Justice

The last of Aristotle's four types of justice is political justice. This area can be divided into contributive justice, dealing with what individuals owe to the society in which they live, and justice in ruling, dealing with what rulers owe to the society they govern.

Starting with contributive justice, there are three obvious things that citizens, or even residents, arguably owe the country in which they live: taxes, labor, and general obedience to the law. Taxes are obviously connected with the previous topic of distributive justice. The government needs to tax people to pay for its services and to redistribute wealth that might need to be redistributed. Labor takes two interesting forms. Arguably, if the state needs people to provide certain services for it to survive or flourish, services such as time in the military or jury duty, then people can be obliged to provide such services. Additionally, people arguably owe the state a form of civic engagement, that which is necessary to support the institutions that must exist for a just state to continue to exist over time. Lastly, it can be argued that people owe the law respect (i.e., obedience), even if they disagree with it, if it is at least close enough to just and was made in a procedurally legitimate way.

Justice in ruling connects with the last point; it is a precondition of the law's legitimacy and the duty of the people to obey it. This topic too allows for a division into two subtopics: the proper aim of the government, and the proper form of the government. Classically, the main concern of political theorists was to emphasize that rulers had a duty to aim at serving the common good, as opposed to their personal gain. By the time of John Locke (around 1690), this idea was refined to include respecting the rights of the individual. That notion was adopted in the U.S. Declaration of Independence, which held as "self-evident, that all men . . . [have] certain unalienable Rights," and that governments are instituted "to secure these rights."

As for the form of government, the classical options for sound government were monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. Today, there is near universal agreement that democracy is required for legitimate governance. As Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, "Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives." Many countries in the world do not respect this right in practice, but few are willing to flout it openly. What is more contested is the proper role of a judiciary to check the power of the democratically elected representatives by reference to some form of more or less hard-to-amend higher (constitutional) law.

Historically Significant Theories of Justice

Theories of justice can be divided into four broad types: virtue-based, natural law, contractarian, and utilitarian. The original Western theories, formulated by Plato and Aristotle, were virtue based. As Plato points out near the beginning of the *Republic*, justice cannot be as simple as giving each person what he is owed, for that would seem to imply that it would be just to return a sword to his owner even when he is in a blind rage. To do better, he suggests that justice is what results, in both a city and a person, when each are ruled by reason. This is ultimately a fairly hollow account because one needs to know what reason requires. Aristotle tries to develop the account further by discussing the idea of equity: giving equal to equals and giving differently to those who are unequal. He tries to use that idea across the various types of justice described above.

Natural law theories also appeal to reason, but they are distinguished by the thought that reason allows one to reach certain clear conclusions that can be expressed in law-like form. Thomas Hobbes and John Locke both, in different ways, appeal to a natural law idea for justice. Hobbes says that justice is keeping promises as long as others will too. Locke thinks that justice is respecting the natural rights to life, liberty, and property. Both use social contract arguments to justify the existence of the state. But the nature of justice, both think, can be articulated independently of the state.

Social contract theories look to the idea of a social contract to determine the content of justice. Immanuel Kant, following Jean-Jacques Rousseau, formulated a theory of right according to which the framing of law (or a general will) under which all can be free is the creation of justice. Rawls follows in that tradition by appealing to the idea of a hypothetical social contract, in which contracting parties design the rules of society behind a veil of ignorance, and thereby, they determine what justice as fairness would require. Deliberative democrats also follow in that tradition, broadly understood, by seeking to provide fair conditions for democratic debate, and letting the debate itself determine what is just.

Lastly, utilitarian theories use the measure of promoting the general happiness or welfare of humanity to set the content of justice. David Hume framed this idea by arguing that justice is adopted only because it is useful in a world of scarcity and competition. And John Stuart Mill followed up by arguing that the rules of justice should be shaped to promote human happiness.

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See also [Locke, John](#); [Rawls, John](#); [Rights, Civil](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Utilitarianism](#)

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Kant's philosophy covers almost every subject. He wrote on metaphysics, natural science, anthropology, morals, aesthetics, history, theology, and politics, to mention the most important. His ambition was not only to have something original to say but also to do so in a systematic manner. In his view, the task of philosophy is to examine critically, ground, and connect theories from the other scientific fields. However, Kant's aim is not primarily theoretical. The ultimate end of philosophy is to clarify what kind of life we should pursue as humans, citizens, and inhabitants of the same world. Hence, political philosophy plays a crucial role in his system. Nevertheless, writings explicitly devoted to this field appear relatively late. One reason is that the search for the fundamental principles of his system took Kant far more time than he had imagined. Another reason is the hierarchical nature of his approach. Political philosophy depended on getting other and more fundamental parts of the system in place.

Life and Early Works

Immanuel Kant was born on April 22, 1724 in Königsberg (now Kaliningrad in Russia), the capital of East Prussia. Apart from the period 1748–56, when he worked as a private teacher in some nearby towns, he never left Königsberg, dying in his hometown on February 12, 1804. Because the city was an important trading port and the home to a number of nationalities, Kant believed that life in Königsberg provided him with an

understanding of human nature and culture that was far from provincial. In fact, he saw himself as a cosmopolitan, a perspective that was to become important in his political philosophy.

Immanuel was the fourth child of Anna Regina and Johann Georg Kant, but only a sister, five years older, had survived early childhood. Johann Georg was a harness maker. The guild was low in rank, and it was not a lucrative business. Nevertheless, Kant always emphasized that his family had never been dependent on anyone and that they had lacked nothing.

Immanuel's parents belonged to the Pietist movement, which was anti-intellectual and embraced mystical elements of personal experience of conversion. In a sense, Pietism was also anti-authoritarian, as it urged independent Bible study rather than strict adherence to the teachings of trained theologians. Still, it demanded obedience to God's commands. Kant had an ambiguous attitude to Pietism. On the one hand, in his parents and many of their friends, he found virtues every human being should strive for: honesty, decency, and inner peace. On the other hand, he was highly critical of the movement's appeal to mystical experiences and its tendency to promote self-condemnation and mechanical obedience. Although Immanuel did not experience any of these elements of Pietism at home, irrational and mystical tendencies were widespread. Moreover, the authoritarian dimension of Pietism permeated the Collegium Friedricianum, his school in the period 1732–40.

The Friedricianum was strongly Pietistic, and almost all subjects were taught with a view to religion, which Kant strongly disliked. In Kant's view, the Friedricianum turned its pupils into servile, uncritical, and hypocritical human beings. In his moral and political writings, Kant would later argue that a proper understanding of ethical principles supports quite opposite virtues: autonomy, critical reflection, and honesty. He also supported the alternative pedagogical movement of Johann Bernard Basedow, which argued for the importance of combining teaching with play and pleasure. This position accorded with Kant's own views that proper education and upbringing should promote the child's sense of self-worth and confidence in addition to duty.

Although Kant disliked the Friedricianum, he got a solid education in theology and languages (Latin, Greek, and Hebrew) and, to some extent, in mathematics and philosophy. In September 1740, he was enrolled at the University of Königsberg. A prudent choice would have been to study theology, which would have given him a steady income as a pastor or even as a professor of theology. The Friedricianum had prepared him well for such a future. Kant chose to study at the philosophical faculty instead. During his student years, he earned his living as a tutor, taking no loans and accepting no stipends, for he regarded being independent as a virtue. Ironically, at the time, the theological faculty exerted heavy control over the philosophy faculty. It regulated its curriculum and denied promotion to lecturers who were not Pietists. Toward the end of his life, Kant wrote a work on university politics, *The Conflict of the Faculties* (1798), in which he argues that it is in the interest of the state to make philosophy the highest faculty. Only this faculty is in the service of truth, and only truth can protect the state against the shortsighted and selfish tendencies of human nature.

As a student of the Faculty of Philosophy, Kant took courses not only in logic, metaphysics, and ethics but also in mathematics and physics. He took great interest in natural science, or “natural philosophy” as it was called at the time, a subject not taught at the Friedricianum. His first five works were in this field, and another six appeared in the period 1756–58. In 1744, he began to work on *Thoughts on the True Estimation of Living Forces*. A thesis delivered at the University would have to be in Latin. Kant wrote in German. He had greater ambitions than a university degree and hoped that *Living Forces* would provide the solution to a longstanding debate between Cartesians and Leibnizians on the proper measurement of force.

Kant’s mother had died when he was 13. In 1745, his father became ill, and Kant left the university to take care of the family. In 1748, two years after his father’s death, Kant took a post as a private teacher outside of Königsberg. He was well treated by the three wealthy families he worked for. He became a close friend of one of them and was a frequent guest in the nobleman’s home.

Living Forces did not bring Kant the fame he had hoped for. He had to return to the university and acquire the rights to serve as a lecturer. By

1756, he had fulfilled all the requirements for a professorship, but there was no position available. Instead, he had to work as a private lecturer and receive money from the students. Kant soon became a popular teacher and could lead quite a comfortable life despite a heavy teaching burden. He often lectured 24 hours a week and covered such different subjects as mathematics, physics, ethics, logic, geography, and metaphysics.

In the period 1758–62 during the Seven Years War, the Russians occupied Königsberg. In many ways it was a time of prospering for the city, and for Kant himself. The Pietists lost much of their power, and Königsberg grew livelier and more cosmopolitan. Kant was a popular guest at dinner parties, where he would discuss German, French, and English literature, as well as fashion and recipes. Kant's ideal was clearly to become a well-rounded human being. Although at the time his written work centered on natural philosophy, in his teaching, he drew attention to aesthetic, moral, and political dimensions of life.

Life and Works 1762–81

In the 1750s, Kant's works focused primarily on questions related to natural science. In the next decade, his writings became more devoted to moral and theological issues, with a more skeptical attitude toward the role of reason. Kant became convinced that the proper end of all inquiry is to understand "the vocation of man." In other words, traditional metaphysics, with its attempts to establish truths about God, afterlife, ultimate forces, and constituents of the universe, had misunderstood its role. In addition, its alleged proofs were spurious. This is the message of works like *The False Subtlety of the Four Syllogistic Figures* (1762), *The Only Possible Basis for a Demonstration of the Existence of God* (1763), and *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer elucidated by Dreams of Metaphysics* (1766).

In 1758, Kant had unsuccessfully applied for a professorship in metaphysics and logic at the University of Königsberg. He continued to have a heavy teaching burden, remaining socially active and participating in reading circles many evenings a week, where learned and lay alike exchanged ideas. In 1769, he was offered a position in Erlangen, but he declined because he did not want to leave Königsberg. In 1770, he was finally appointed

professor of metaphysics and logic in Königsberg, defending his dissertation in Latin: *On the Form and Principles of the Intelligible and Sensible World*. From the point of view of moral and political philosophy, the main import of this work was its break with the sentimentalist position that Kant had supported the decade before. Now Kant held that moral principles can be sought only by the intellect. Without such principles, feelings confuse rather than guide our judgments. In his later moral and political writings, he remains faithful to this view.

Kant soon told a friend that he was working on a short book to elaborate the views of the dissertation, with an addition on moral philosophy. A year later, this project had been reframed to focus on the limits of human sensibility and reason. It took him another 10 years until the *Critique of Pure Reason* was ready for publication, in 1781.

Works 1781–86

The *Critique of Pure Reason* is Kant's most famous work. Since it lays down the foundations for all other philosophizing, it is arguably also the most important. Still, from the point of view of moral and political philosophy, it hardly does more than lay some bricks for such a foundation. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant argues that it is in principle impossible to *know* whether God in fact exists. Therefore, moral and political philosophy must have a secular basis. Kant also argues that although we can never *know* that we are in fact free, we are still entitled to *think* that we are free. This is a crucial step for moral and political philosophy as Kant sees it. For only an action that can be imputed to someone in the sense that it is seen to spring from that very person's free will can it reasonably be subject to moral blame and praise. Moreover, it is only free beings that can ground a civil society because as we shall see, such a society must be conceived of as if arising through a contract among free individuals.

How *ought* we to act, and what kind of society should we strive for? These are the fundamental questions of moral and political philosophy. In his work of 1785, *Groundwork of a Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant lays the foundation for answering them. Here he argues that the supreme law of morality takes the form of a categorical imperative that says: "Act only

according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law” (*Groundwork*, Academy Edition [AK] 4: 421/39). A maxim is a rule you decide to live by, and the categorical imperative commands you to choose only such rules that you could will everyone else to choose as well.

Kant also presents other formulations of the categorical imperative. The most important is the command never to treat human beings as a mere means but always also as ends in themselves. However, none of the formulations suffice for moral philosophy proper or for political philosophy. To know how we should act and which laws a society should be based on, we need to move to another level of inquiry. Nevertheless, Kant’s next work in practical philosophy, *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), does not make this move. Just like the *Groundwork*, its main theme is the relationship between freedom and the categorical imperative. And like the *Groundwork*, it emphasizes the unsuitability of feelings as a source for moral principles.

Both the *Groundwork* and the *Critique of Practical Reason* have given readers the impression that in general Kant is suspicious of or even hostile to human emotions. However, the recognition that in these works Kant is preoccupied with the question of the foundations of morality rather than with the whole range of questions relating to human conduct makes his many critical remarks about feelings at least somewhat more understandable. In Kant’s view, feelings are far too whimsical to yield principles that are supposed to be morally binding for everyone.

Kant’s Political Philosophy

Just after he had finished the *Groundwork*, Kant wrote two essays with an explicitly political content. In “Ideas for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View” (1784), he argues that the final end of human progress is the state in which our capacity for freedom is maximally realized. A crucial step toward this end is the forming of a civil society. Without such a society, humans would exist in a so-called state of nature where there are no laws and no legitimate power. The idea of such a state of nature had first been presented by Thomas Hobbes (1651) and later modified in different ways by John Locke (1679) and Jean Jacques

Rousseau (1762). Kant offers his own twist: Humans are naturally torn between egocentricity on the one hand and a yearning for respect from others on the other. This tension needs to be resolved, but within the state of nature, it cannot. Hence, humankind is driven to form a civil society. In this way, the rights of each individual become regulated, and everyone is secured a minimum amount of freedom to pursue their interests without depending on the respect or kindness of others. From this stage, however, the society must move onward toward a just civil constitution, a move Kant believes is extremely hard to make because of the “crooked wood out of which man is made.” By extending his line of reasoning from individuals to states, Kant concludes that the end of human progress can be realized only in a community of states under a world government. Without such a world order, the states will engage in endless wars, and the freedom of their citizens will be seriously hampered.

That same year (1784) Kant also wrote “What is Enlightenment?” His answer is that Enlightenment is the stage in history when humankind can think for itself without tutelage. Although Kant’s own age was not yet fully enlightened, it was nevertheless an age in which the first steps toward Enlightenment could be made. Politically speaking, the required step is to secure the freedom to make “public use of one’s reason”; that is, the freedom of a scholar to present his views before “the whole world of readers.” Still, Kant thought that “the private use of reason”—in other words, the use of reason *within* a civil post—should be restricted. A priest or a lawyer should not be free to criticize the doctrines on which his office is based.

The later *Conflict of the Faculties* (1798) confirms the distinction between the public and the private use of reason. It is also itself a manifestation of Kant’s public use of his reason against the constitution of the university. Even before that work, Kant had challenged the authorities. His philosophical reinterpretation of the Bible in *Religion Within the Bounds of Mere Reason* (1793) and his clever avoidance of the censors in Berlin almost cost him his job. In 1794, he had to promise the king, Fredrick Wilhelm II, to “refrain from discoursing publicly, in lectures or writings, on religion, whether natural or revealed” (AK 11: 527, letter 642). Kant kept his promise as long as the king was alive.

In 1793, Kant published an essay called “On the Old Saying: ‘That May Be Right in Theory but It Won’t Work in Practice.’” In addition to addressing the question of the relationship between theory and practice in the moral sphere, Kant extends the question to the legal sphere: Why should we obey existing governments, and are there any circumstances that allow us to make an exception? Although he had talked enthusiastically about the French Revolution (1789), even at dinner parties with noblemen, his official answer is that however unjust the laws may be, no citizen has the right to disobey or rebel. The reason is that there can be no other rightful power than that of a government. As Hobbes had argued, when the people take the power into their own hands, they in effect leave the civil society and return to the state of nature. Therefore, the only legitimate means at one’s disposal within the civil society is to criticize the government in public.

By the standards of his time, Kant had become an old man, and the power of his intellect was diminishing. But there was still work to be done, not the least in political philosophy. *Toward Perpetual Peace* appeared in 1795. Here Kant no longer argues for a world state since this is incompatible with the freedom of each state. Instead, he argues that lasting peace requires a federation of free states whose only task is to protect the freedom of each state from being harmed by wars. Although his understanding of cosmopolitanism has changed, cosmopolitanism still plays an important role. Every human being is born on the same spherical Earth, which originally belongs to all of us. As citizens of the world, we therefore have a special right to hospitality, that is, the right to travel freely between states and to be treated without hostility. This right does not mean that one can make claims to permanent residence and work, but one is at least entitled to visit other states and to offer to engage in commerce. Kant believed that such interaction between different peoples would enhance the process toward perpetual peace since it ensures that “the violation of right on one place of the earth is felt in all.” (*Perpetual Peace*, AK 8:360)

In 1797, Kant finished *The Metaphysical Foundations of the Doctrine of Right* and published it the same year together with *The Metaphysical Foundations of the Doctrine of Virtue*, in a book called *The Metaphysics of Morals*. This is his last significant work. Later works are either

compilations of earlier writings or lectures. When he died, he also left behind a large quantity of unfinished notes.

The topic of the *Doctrine of Right* is the rights and duties that pertain to persons and states. According to Kant, there is only one innate right that belongs to every person, namely, the right to freedom “in so far as it can coexist with everyone’s freedom in accordance with a universal law” (*Metaphysics of Morals*, AK 6:230). The affinity between this understanding of right and the categorical imperative is obvious. Still, there is an important difference between a right and a morally good action. For Kant, actions are *morally good* only if they are performed on the basis of a freely adopted moral intention. When it comes to the question of *right*, the intention is no longer at issue because a right puts other people under obligation. It gives rise to duties that others can be coerced to perform, and clearly one cannot be coerced to adopt *freely* an intention. This line of reasoning also explains why the principle of right concerns only *external* freedom; in other words, our freedom to act. The categorical imperative, on the other hand, is a principle for our *inner* freedom, that is, our freedom to will or intend.

In earlier works, Kant had claimed that the civil state is an inevitable result of certain tensions in human nature. In the *Doctrine of Right*, his argument changes: in accordance with Hobbes, Kant argues that every person has a natural right to property, but without a civil society, there would in fact be no difference between proper ownership and mere physical possession. I could physically hold something in my possession, for example by clinging to it, but my claims to ownership would lack the required support. There would be no laws to appeal to and no coercive power to call on if others took my property away from me. To ensure our natural right to ownership, we therefore have a duty to leave the state of nature and enter into a civil society. Kant thinks of the civil society *as if* arising through an original contract of free persons. This “original act” expresses the universal will of the people and therefore justifies the authority of the state. The idea of the original contract also sets limits to the legislative powers by ruling out laws that “a whole people could not possibly give its consent to.” As an example of what one could not consent to, Kant mentions hereditary privileges. He also argues, like Locke, that the civil society should be a republic wherein

the legislative, executive, and judicial functions are maintained by different authorities. Only thus can propensities to tyranny be curbed.

In accordance with Locke, Kant argues that the right to a piece of land or an object is a private property right that one can acquire also in the state of nature. Kant also discusses other private rights such as rights against persons acquired through contracts, and the rights that pertain to children and parents. Within a civil society, these rights are sanctioned by public laws, which belong to the sphere of public right, i.e., right overseen by the state. Kant extends the discussion of public right to rights that obtain between states. In the spirit of *Perpetual Peace*, he claims: “Only in a universal association of states can rights come to hold conclusively and a true condition of peace come about” (*Metaphysics of Morals*, AK 6:350). However, he now sees this hope as an ideal that can never be fully realized. Still, the cosmopolitan right to travel and to offer to engage in commerce might help our continual striving toward it.

In Kant’s view, the duty of the state is to secure the right of freedom of its citizens to the extent that the “free choice of each must accord with the freedom of all” (*Metaphysics of Morals*, AK 6:263). As Hobbes had suggested, the state should also ensure that those who are unable to care for themselves receive help. But the state has no obligation to make its citizens comfortable or happy. In fact the state’s right to claim taxes and to punish those who do not obey might well make people angry and frustrated. When it comes to human rights, contemporary readers may find Kant’s political philosophy somewhat disappointing. He acknowledges the innate right to freedom and equality, and the right to express oneself, but has little to say about such important rights as right to life and health. In light of his emphasis on the dignity and worth of every human being, his claim that women should not have the right to vote is surprising and indeed offensive. Another aspect of Kant’s political philosophy that tends to upset contemporary readers is his adherence to retributive justice or the principle “an eye for an eye.” Whether on these issues Kant was simply a victim of the prejudices of his time, or harbored deeper philosophical reasons for his views, is still a matter of debate.

Although Kant's moral and political writings are sometimes difficult to understand and contain elements that seem indefensible to a modern reader, they have been an important source of inspiration for a number of later thinkers such as Hannah Arendt, Robert Nozick, John Rawls, and Jürgen Habermas. It is also fair to say that Kant's understanding of human beings as ends in themselves has made an invaluable contribution to our modern conception of human worth and human rights.

Camilla Serck-Hanssen

See also [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [French Revolution, Political Thought of the](#); [German Enlightenment](#); [Locke, John](#)

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Gary P. Steenson Gary P. Steenson

Kautsky, Karl

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Kautsky, Karl

Karl Kautsky (1854–1938) was the leading theoretician of Marxism from Friedrich Engels's death in 1895 to the outbreak of World War I. His close association with Engels and passing acquaintance with Karl Marx gave his work the stamp of legitimacy. More importantly, his early work about Marx's theories and interpretation of history—*The Economic Doctrines of Karl Marx* (1887)—spread the word throughout the world, was translated into scores of languages, and was credited by both Lenin and Mao, among many others, with introducing them to Marxism. But above all else, his prominence derived from his intimate association with the German Social Democratic Party (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland*, SPD), for decades the world's largest avowedly Marxian worker party. He was a major architect of the SPD's Erfurt program (1891), which established the Marxian nature of the party, and his exegesis of this program (*The Erfurt Program*, 1892) was even more widely translated and distributed than his earlier work. Kautsky's influence in the SPD was mainly a product of his close affiliation with August Bebel, the longtime party leader and Reichstag representative. Finally, his international influence and reputation were further enhanced by his many decades as editor of *Die neue Zeit*, the preeminent journal of Marxism in the years before 1914, and the literally hundreds of articles and books in which he applied Marxian analysis to contemporary and historical subjects.

Although he always insisted that the workers' movement was necessarily a political movement, he himself was no politician; that is, he was never a

party officer nor a candidate in Reichstag elections. He was often not even a delegate to the party's congresses except *ex officio* as editor of *Die neue Zeit*, and he usually did not participate in the heated debates the congresses produced. Nonetheless, at the frequent urging of Bebel, Kautsky took public stands on political issues that affected the party.

Up to 1905, most of his polemics were aimed at the party's right wing—primarily south Germans and trade unionists, who had significant theoretical support from Eduard Bernstein, the founder of revisionism. This faction held, as Bernstein put it, that “the end is nothing, the movement everything”; that is, piecemeal gains in wages, organization, worker protection, and so on were more important than revolution and the seizure of political power by the proletariat. Kautsky argued that while these things were necessary, the end goal of political power should not be subordinated to them and, in fact, that the party was superior to the rank-and-file movement as mentor and guide. After the 1905 Russian Revolution, a much more vigorous left-wing party faction, headed by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, began to agitate for a more aggressive posture for the party. Against the left, Kautsky emphasized the recklessness of confronting the state prematurely; he was especially concerned that the “mass strike,” a tactic that gained considerable backing after 1905, would be destructive to the movement if undertaken before the time was ripe.

Thus, Kautsky's political position was centrist, emphasizing the necessity of the movement and its demands for more benefits and political influence for the workers but also cautioning against risking all when the state was still very strong. The perplexing characterization of the SPD as a “revolutionary, but not a revolution-making” party was what Kautsky offered as an alternative to the right's abandonment of revolution and the left's eagerness to force the revolution by violent action. Such a middle-of-the-road position did not long survive the tremendous disruption brought on by the war in 1914–18, and then the revolutions in Russia in 1917 and Germany in 1918. In the case of the war, the workers proved themselves, at the beginning, to be far from the ardent internationalists Marxists had hoped they would be. As for the two revolutions, the extremism of the revolutionary situation put a stop to centrism of any sort—in Russia, the chaos and destruction of the war brought the most extreme element to power, and in Germany, the

nationalism and fear of greater chaos ensured, in the short run, the emergence of the most conservative segment of the SPD. Kautsky's position lost everywhere.

Kautsky's influence declined rapidly during the war, and his influence and reputation faded further after 1918. In that year, he wrote an attack on the Bolsheviks to which Lenin responded with *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*. The substance of Lenin's counterattack was that Kautsky had *always* misread Marx and that under his theoretical leadership the proletariat had been led into a quagmire from which it could be freed only by a determined and united revolutionary party. Born in Prague, then part of the Austrian empire, Kautsky died in Amsterdam fleeing the Nazis.

Gary P. Steenson

See also [Communism](#), [Varieties of](#); [Engels, Friedrich](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Socialism](#)

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Keynes, John Maynard

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Keynes, John Maynard

John Maynard Keynes was an important participant in the creation of modern economic policy, by virtue of his practical work in the Treasury during both World War I and World War II, and through his advocacy of a new international economic order in the early 1940s, culminating in the Bretton Woods Agreement of July 1944. Bretton Woods laid the foundations for the postwar international economy, creating a system of international economic management, a series of fixed exchange rates tied to the U.S. dollar, and two new institutions, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank (initially known as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development). No agreement could be reached in the mid-1940s on the structure of the third component of this new order, the World Trade Organization, which was eventually formed only in 1995.

Keynes is (rightly) known for his authorship of the *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (1936), a path-breaking work generally agreed to be the founding moment of modern macroeconomics, and (wrongly) as the originator of “Keynesianism,” a conception of the relation of government and economy in which the former seeks to steer the latter along a consistent growth path. Keynes died in 1946, shortly after renegotiating the American loan that regularized Britain’s postwar financial dependence on the United States, although most of the loan was squandered in just over a month during the summer of 1947 defending sterling at the rate of \$4.03 to £1, convertibility at this rate having been made a condition of the loan by the U.S. government. Convertibility was first suspended in

August 1947 and the conversion rate then subsequently pegged in 1949 at a defensible \$2.80.

Keynes was born on June 5, 1883, at 6 Harvey Road, Cambridge, the first child of John Neville and Florence Keynes. His lifelong connection with Cambridge University ran through his father, who as a University Lecturer in Moral Sciences and later Registrar (or Registry, as the position is known at Cambridge) played an important part in the modernization of the University from the 1890s to the 1930s. Educated first at Eton and then at King's College, Cambridge, Keynes graduated twelfth in the ranking of 1905 mathematics firsts. That autumn he attended Alfred Marshall's lectures on economics, and he received weekly supervisions from Arthur Cecil Pigou, Marshall's chosen successor in the Cambridge chair. In 1906, he took the Civil Service examination, came in second, and was consequently assigned to the India Office. When in 1908 Pigou became Professor, he funded two lectureships in economics out of his own pocket, and the University gave one of these to Keynes. He was elected a Fellow of King's in 1910 and from 1912 served as editor of the *Economic Journal*, which provided him with an education in contemporary economic thinking.

Initially Keynes's chief interest as an economist was monetary theory, filling out Alfred Marshall's treatment in his lectures but not venturing beyond it. His first book, *Indian Currency and Finance*, was published in 1913, but this academic interest quickly turned practical with the outbreak of war in 1914. In January 1915, he joined the Treasury for the duration of the war, closely involved with the increasingly difficult issues of war finance. This led to his place on the British delegation at the Paris Peace Conference, where his chief task was the determination of the war reparations to be demanded of Germany. Already disenchanted with the French and other allies in the later phases of the war, his disillusion with the terms of the Treaty of Versailles was condensed in *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* (1919), demonstrating *inter alia* that if Germany were to "pay" for the war, then the rest of the world had a strong interest in the reconstruction of German industry and the revival of international trade. This book made Keynes famous and inaugurated a long and successful career of economic journalism. He resigned his University

Lectureship in 1920, but his active connection with Cambridge, its students, and its economists continued through his King's Fellowship.

During the 1920s, Keynes built a private fortune through speculation and wrote extensively about domestic economic policy—*A Tract on Monetary Reform* (1923), *The Economic Consequences of Mr. Churchill* (1925), and *Can Lloyd George Do It?* (1929). In 1930, he published *A Treatise on Money*, introducing new arguments about monetary policy and economic activity but soon began revising his arguments into those of the *General Theory*. A central contention of this book is that economic equilibrium does not necessarily imply full employment and maximum output and that monetary policy can play a role in securing full employment. Fiscal arguments were added to this in his important *How to Pay for the War* (1940), and the subsequent elaboration of Keynes's ideas by his English and American followers laid almost exclusive emphasis on the role of fiscal policy in postwar economic management.

Keith Tribe

See also [Capitalism](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Liberalism](#)

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Daniel Webb Daniel Webb

Khomeini, Ayatollah

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Khomeini, Ayatollah

Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (1902–89), was the former supreme leader (1979–89) of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Although many aspects of his thought are ancient, stretching back to the founding of Islam and the internal schism that led to the creation of the Shia branch of the religion, it can only be fully understood in the context, and as a product, of events in the twentieth century.

There has never been a sharp separation between church and state in the Islamic world, at least in a manner similar to the Western republican tradition. However, neither has there been a comprehensive Islamic theory of the state or political rule. It is true that Shia Islam has always possessed a certain inherent political character (considering that it was born from a dispute over who should rule the *ummah* after Muhammad's death), but until the early 1900s, the Shia *ulama* seemed content to allow secular governments to rule as long as the community was not prevented from practicing its faith. This all changed dramatically in the mid-twentieth century, specifically in Iran.

In the 1950s, the Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi began implementing a series of policies and programs aimed at rapidly modernizing and secularizing the country. Although many events precipitated the revolution of 1979, most notably the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)–backed *coup d'état* against the nationalist prime minister Mohammed Mossadegh in 1953, the most prevalent ideological concern that fueled anti-Shah

resentment was the perception that his policies constituted an attempt to erase Iranian culture, religion, and sovereignty and replace them with Western cultural values, atheism, and dependence on the United States and other Western countries. This effacing of traditional Iranian culture was known as *gharbzadegi* or “westoxification.” It is in this respect that Khomeinism is clearly a product of modernity as much as it is an expression of premodern times.

The most fundamental idea that informed Khomeini’s thought is that humans are spiritually weak and morally fallible. To correct for these failings, Khomeini argued that society should be governed by laws created not by humans but by those revealed by God. Therefore, those who were most knowledgeable of the Law (*Shari’a*)—the *mujtahids* or *ulama*—should rule. It should be noted that this position delegitimized democracy as a political system because in democracies governance is invested in the people, and the same people are entrusted with choosing their representatives. Betraying Islam’s Platonic influences, it was posited by Khomeini that proper moral education and just laws, modeled on the “Golden Era” of Muhammad’s time, would lead to a just society. This was the basis for Khomeini’s *valayat-e-faqih*, or rule by religious jurists—a comprehensive and in many ways modern form of government (in that all the trappings of a modern nation-state had to be incorporated into what was, otherwise, a very anti-modern ideology).

The basic structure of the contemporary Iranian government is divided into four branches: (1) the Supreme Leader, (2) the Guardian Council, (3) the Council of Experts, and (4) the Judiciary. In addition to these four institutions, an elected parliament—the *majlis*—operates as a legislature, but policies proposed by this body can be arbitrarily vetoed by the Guardian Council, and the Council also reserves the power to choose which candidates are acceptable for running in elections

Immediately after the Revolution, Khomeini instituted social policies consistent with Islamic ethical principles. For example, the Qur’anic imperative to dress modestly was translated into laws requiring that women who have attained puberty wear the hijab. As part of the anti-westoxification movement, Western styles of clothes were largely banned,

along with cosmetics, literature, cinema, and other cultural products. Limiting access to certain consumer goods and the censorship of media was justified by the argument that Western consumer culture leads to excessive behavior, materialism, conspicuous consumption, and envy between neighbors, all highly discouraged by the Qur'an and the *Hadith*. Finally, consistent with the Islamic principle that all secular ideologies—liberalism, socialism, and particularly nationalism—divide the Muslim community, Khomeinism was premised on the idea that the *ummah* should be united in a single community. Therefore, revolutionary Iran avowedly attempted to export the Revolution to other Muslim countries, most notably through their financial support for Shia groups like Hezbollah in Lebanon.

The lasting impact of Khomeinist ideology has been profound. Political and militant Islamic groups around the world have been inspired and emboldened by the successful revolution in Iran, and they see the Islamic Republic as a viable model of government to replace what are perceived as corrupt regimes, and to resist the encroachment of Western power and culture in Muslim societies. Contemporary Iran still stands at the epicenter of what some, like Samuel Huntington, believe is a civilizational clash between the Islamic and the Western world. Others understand the conflict as symptomatic of unjust power relations in a globalized world.

Daniel Webb

See also [Islamic Political Thought](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#)

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King, Martin Luther, Jr.

Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (1929–68) was the most distinguished American civil rights leader of the twentieth century. In 1955, at the age of 26, he began his civil rights career by leading the successful Montgomery (Alabama) bus boycott to gain equal access to city buses for black citizens. King led the successful Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. His leadership resulted in the successful passage of the Civil Rights Bill of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. He is the first and only black American to have a U.S. national holiday named after him and the only nonpresident to have a memorial on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

King attended segregated public schools in Atlanta, Georgia, graduating from high school at the age of 15. In 1948, at age 19, he received a B. A. degree in sociology from Morehouse College, the distinguished black college in Atlanta from which both his father and grandfather had graduated. He enrolled in Crozer Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania, where he was elected president of a largely white senior class and was class valedictorian. At 22, he received a Bachelor of Divinity degree. He completed a Doctor of Theology degree at Boston University in 1955. While in Boston, he met and married Coretta Scott, a gifted student from Marion, Alabama, who was studying at the New England Conservatory of Music. They had two sons and two daughters: Yolanda Denise, Martin Luther III, Dexter Scott, and Bernice Albertine.

In 1954, he became pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. Although Dr. King was already active in civil rights, serving on the Executive Committee of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, it was in Montgomery in 1955 that his civil rights leadership took a historic turn. He was asked to lead the Montgomery bus boycott, which lasted 381 days, until December 20, 1956. (On December 21, 1956, the U.S. Supreme Court declared the laws requiring segregation on buses to be unconstitutional.) During this boycott, King was arrested, his home was bombed, and he was subjected to personal abuse and deadly threats; yet he emerged as the leader of the U.S. Civil Rights Movement.

King took his civil rights ideals from his theological studies as well as from the teachings of Gandhi. While studying theology at Crozer, King heard a lecture on Mahatma Gandhi and the nonviolent civil disobedience campaign that had been used successfully against British imperial rule in India. King was particularly struck by Gandhi's words: "Through our pain we will make them see their injustice." King was also influenced by Henry David Thoreau's theories on how to use nonviolent resistance to achieve social change. King applied these techniques during the successful Montgomery bus boycott. In 1957, he helped found and was elected president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), which had the goal of providing new leadership for Civil Rights Movements. He again applied Gandhi's beliefs and techniques to the many civil rights activities carried out by SCLC through the South as well as in Chicago and Los Angeles. Over the next 11 years, King was arrested more than 20 times. In 1959, Dr. King and his wife, Coretta, traveled to India as the guest of Indian Prime Minister Nehru. He came back from India even more convinced that Gandhi's methods were the key to success for blacks in their struggles to obtain equal rights.

In 1960, Dr. King moved his family back to Atlanta and assumed a joint pastorate of Ebenezer Baptist Church with his father, Rev. Martin Luther King, Sr., and pastored at Ebenezer until 1968. From his SCLC office in Atlanta, he and his fellow leaders planned subsequent civil rights campaigns. He helped lead the Alabama campaign for registration of Negroes as voters. He also helped direct the 1963 March on Washington,

D.C., at which 250,000 people heard him deliver his “I Have a Dream” speech. He was named “Man of the Year” by *Time Magazine* in 1963; in 1964, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize at 35, the youngest person to receive this honor.

At the age of 39, on the evening of April 4, 1968, King was assassinated while standing on the balcony of his motel room in Memphis, Tennessee, where he was to lead a protest march in sympathy with striking sanitation workers. Immediately after his death, his wife and others continued the struggle, establishing the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, the King National Holiday, and the King Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

In works such as *Why We Can't Wait* and “Letter from the Birmingham Jail,” as well as his speeches, King developed a unique theoretical synthesis articulating the inherent connections among equal rights for people of color, economic justice for all, opposition to war, and a strategy of militant but peaceful civil disobedience that rejected gradual progress for the oppressed. According to his famous dictum, “justice delayed is justice denied.”

Controversies surrounding King included his willingness to break the law, allegations that he had plagiarized parts of his doctoral dissertation, and his decision toward the end of his life to move beyond his original focus on civil rights for blacks to the additional goals of ending poverty and resisting the U.S. military presence in Vietnam.

Stephen C. Thomas

See also [Gandhi, Mohandas \(Mahatma\)](#); [Justice](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#)

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Peter Alexeievitch Kropotkin (1842–1921) is regarded as one of the foremost revolutionary socialists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a theoretician of anarchism and a leading exponent of anarcho-communism—a doctrine he helped to elaborate from the late 1870s. Born into considerable privilege, he grew up in what he described as Moscow's Faubourg Saint-Germain and attended the prestigious corps of pages, an elite school in St. Petersburg, beginning in 1857. In 1860, as a constitutionalist influenced by Alexander Herzen, he edited his first revolutionary paper. Two years later, motivated by a desire to find an outlet for his reforming impulses, Kropotkin refused the opportunity of a glittering career at court in the Guards and instead joined the mounted Cossacks of the Amur region. He spent the next five years in Siberia. Radicalized by the experience, he left the military in 1867 to study geography at St. Petersburg University. Five years later, encouraged by a trip to Western Europe, Kropotkin had become an anarchist. He gave up his academic career for revolutionary activity and worked with the radical Chaikovsky Circle, who championed education for the masses and political reform. Arrested in 1874, Kropotkin was incarcerated in Peter-Paul Fortress. Aided by his comrades, he escaped from the prison infirmary to begin a life in exile in Western Europe that lasted from 1876 until 1917.

Kropotkin's reputation rests on his ability to exploit a range of different media to propagate his views. Drawing on his scholarship and his preeminent position in the international revolutionary movement, he wrote

for educated middle-class audiences as well as for fellow radicals and exploited groups. In books, pamphlets, essays, newspaper articles, and speeches—many of which appeared in translation across the globe—Kropotkin articulated a set of claims about the irrationality and injustices of capitalism and the state to develop a specifically anarchist political theory. He was able to turn his mind to virtually any issue, and he chose topics ranging from the analysis of modern gardening practices and the science of X-rays to the migratory habits of Siberian tigers and the international division of labor to explore the social, economic, political, and cultural dimensions of anarchism.

Kropotkin is now often remembered for his book *Mutual Aid: A Factor in Evolution* and his critique of the Social Darwinian view of the natural world as a sphere governed by the competitive struggle for individual advantage. Yet this book belongs to a more extensive body of work. *Modern Science and Anarchism*, *Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal*, *The State: Its Historic Role*, *Anarchist Morality*, and the posthumously published *Ethics* all probe themes related to mutual aid. In his lifetime, moreover, he was equally celebrated as the author of pamphlets such as “The Appeal to the Young,” “The Spirit of Revolt,” and “The Wage System” and books including *Fields, Factories and Workshops* and *The Conquest of Bread*. In addition, Kropotkin wrote an influential history of the French Revolution, an exposé (based on his own experiences) of the brutality of prison life (In *French and Russian Prisons*), and a critical review of Russian literature (*Ideals and Realities in Russian Literature*).

Running through Kropotkin’s anarchism is an ethical ideal that extends from his association with Russian populism. In his autobiography (*Memoirs of a Revolutionist*), he recalls how the Chaikovsky Circle to which he belonged developed an approach to social relations based on mutual respect, honesty, transparency, equality, and care. These ideas were consciously elaborated and practiced as a critical response to the secrecy, anonymity, and amorality of Nechaevism. And Kropotkin made reference to the personal virtues of the Chaikovskists when he later discussed the idea of mutual aid. The formal principle was described in terms of altruism: nonreciprocal giving, voluntary cooperation, and compassion.

Communism, the principle of distribution according to need, was not only a necessary corollary of anarchist ethics, but for Kropotkin, it provided the best institutional safeguard against private accumulation and/or the reappearance of centralized systems of state regulation. Its operation required the close integration of agriculture and industry and the careful, creative application of technology to facilitate local self-sufficiency.

Kropotkin's faith in the possibility of anarchy was informed by the role he believed authority assumed in the state: to infantilize as much as to frighten. With the extension of the state's regulatory powers, individual initiative was compromised. Yet Kropotkin reasoned that it was always possible to expand the realm for mutual aid by organizing outside state structures. His hope was that ordinary people might overcome their fears of repression and find the motivation to act for themselves, as he put it, from a desire to eradicate the economic injustices they suffered. Should this prove lacking, Kropotkin anticipated Caesarism: Following the Prussian model, states were tending toward greater militarization, industrial monopoly, and social control. It was from a concern to resist this drift that he decided—controversially—to support the Allies in 1914.

For anarchist critics, Kropotkin's anarchism imposes obligations and duties on individuals that are themselves oppressive. He admitted that anarchism was about sacrifice but denied that it involved abstinence. His appeal to the young was not to renounce dreams, only selfish gain. And the compassionate recognition of other's needs was not based on a calculation of best interests. This was the point he tried to make to Lenin, unfortunately without success, in 1917.

Ruth Kinna

See also [Anarchism](#); [Russian Political Thought](#); [Russian Revolution, Political Thought of the](#)

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Antonio Labriola (1843–1904) was born in Cassino near Naples on July 2, 1843, to a modest middle-class family (his father was a high school teacher). In 1861, the year in which the newly united Kingdom of Italy was proclaimed, he enrolled in the University of Naples, at that time the leading center in Italy for idealist thought, and read philosophy. After failing to complete his degree, he worked as a schoolteacher and as a journalist while looking to secure an academic appointment. His early essays on Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Plato, together with studies on Baruch Spinoza and Ludwig Feuerbach (which marked a significant step in his evolution away from idealism toward materialism), and the support of his university tutor, the great Hegelian scholar Bertrando Spaventa, earned him a university position at the University of Rome in 1874.

Although Labriola is generally regarded as the founder of Italian Marxism, he in fact became a Marxist only toward the end of his life. In correspondence with Friedrich Engels, whom he came to know along with other leading European socialists in the early 1890s, he described himself as having gone through an intellectual evolution not dissimilar to that of Marx: an initial and somewhat intoxicating encounter with Hegel, a subsequent period in which he sought to free himself from Hegel, and finally a commitment to historical materialism.

For most of the 1870s and 1880s, Labriola might best be described as a “bourgeois” moderate, committed to a secular culture, to the separation

between church and state, and above all to the expansion of education to the working classes, which he saw as vital for broadening Italy's democratic base and strengthening the political institutions at a time of mounting economic and social unrest and growing concern at the quality of the country's parliamentary government. It was in recognition of his commitment to educational concerns that in 1877 he added to his chair the job of director of the Museo dell'Istruzione e di Educazione—a state appointment he owed to the reform-minded minister of education Ruggero Bonghi.

Labriola was one of those unusual people who, with age, moved to the left. By the mid-1880s, “moderate” was no longer an adequate a description for someone who had become critical of liberalism, espoused the extension of the suffrage, advocated welfare support for the poor and the disabled, and promoted mass schooling. In 1887, he described himself in a letter to a Rome newspaper as being “theoretically socialist,” and the following year, he delivered a speech to steelworkers on “*Le idee della democrazia*”—the text has unfortunately been lost—in which he announced his commitment to political activism and his hopes for a “government of the people made by the people itself.” Like most of the (left) Italian intelligentsia, he was also an enthusiastic “social” imperialist and believed that the conquest of Libya would enable Italy to catch up with other European countries. In the early 1890s, he produced a set of essays that constituted his main work, published in 1895 under the title: *Saggi intorno alla concezione materialistica della storia* (1895) (English title: “Essays on the Materialist Conception of History”). Engels's positive verdict (*Alles sehr gut*—“It's all very good”) and their publication in the journal *Le Devenir social* edited by Georges Sorel, enhanced his wider fame. In fact, he had become one of the first academic Marxists in Europe.

Labriola's method of exposition and argument displayed many of the virtues and defects of subsequent Italian Marxism. There was a rejection of dogmatism, a disdain for the overarching summa so loved by German socialists such as Karl Kautsky, and a refusal to see the connection between the economic base and the political and ideological superstructure as being automatic. At the same time, the opaque prose, the lack of precision, and the absence of systematic analysis of the subject matter made it difficult for

his so-called “genetic” (a term he favored over the fashionable “dialectical”) method to be applied to solidly grounded empirical analyses. These remained the preserve of the school of positivist sociologists. His relationship with the Italian Socialist Party (first constituted in 1892) and particularly with its leader, Filippo Turati, was often fraught, and he was disappointed by the idealist turn of the influential philosopher Benedetto Croce against Marxism. He died of cancer in 1904 in Rome. Later in the twentieth century, he was championed by both Antonio Gramsci and Palmiro Togliatti, but he remained little known outside a narrow circle of academic specialists.

Christopher J.H. Duggan

See also [Communism, Varieties of](#); [Croce, Benedetto](#); [Gramsci, Antonio](#); [Hegelianism](#); [Italian Political Thought](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Sorel, Georges](#)

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Laclau, Ernesto

Laclau, Ernesto

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Laclau, Ernesto

Ernesto Laclau (1935–) is an Argentinean-born political philosopher whose works have contributed significantly to the development of post-Marxist thought and recent theories of political discourse, ideology, and radical democracy. He began his studies at the University of Buenos Aires, where he was also active in various left-wing movements including the Socialist Party of the National Left. In 1969, he moved to England to continue his studies at Oxford University. Since 1973, he has taught in the Department of Government at Essex University, and he has held guest professorships in the United States.

Early in his career, Laclau was already skeptical of the classical Marxist emphasis on the determining role of the economy. His studies of capitalism in Latin America, as well as his political activities in Argentina, convinced him that culture and ideology are as important as the market. This insight led him to embrace the thought of Antonio Gramsci and Louis Althusser. The influence of Althusser's structural Marxism waned in subsequent years as Laclau became more engaged with the poststructuralist theories of thinkers like Jacques Lacan and Jacques Derrida. Following on the 1977 publication of a well-received book titled *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory: Capitalism, Fascism, Populism*, Laclau embarked on a fundamental critique of Marxism and a reconceptualization of radical thought. The first fruits of this project appeared in *Hegemony & Socialist Strategy*, the influential book that Laclau co-authored with his wife, Belgian-born philosopher Chantal Mouffe. Published in 1985, the book announced itself

as the first significant effort to develop a post-Marxist theory of radical politics.

Hegemony & Socialist Strategy argues that Marxism, with its deterministic logic and essentialist categories, no longer provides an adequate guide for a new political era characterized by the breakdown of class-based politics and the post-1968 proliferation of new social movements. To address this complex social terrain, Laclau and Mouffe combine Gramsci's theory of hegemony with poststructuralist discourse theory. Contrary to classical Marxism, they argue that neither social identities nor political conflicts can be exhaustively traced to an ultimate economic foundation. Whereas Gramsci sought to supplement Marxism's determinist model with a theory of contingent struggle for sociocultural hegemony waged between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, Mouffe and Laclau free Gramsci's theory from its lingering attachment to the Marxist base-superstructure model. Hegemony, they argue, is an antagonistic process whereby the social world is constructed through discursive practices operating in a political space that is not itself determined by the logic of anything exterior to it. In the absence of any point of ultimate anchor, social meaning becomes fluid, and the impossibility of closure opens the possibility of hegemonic politics. Instead of preserving a fixed and supposedly immutable set of social classes or categories, these politics proceed through contests over the meaning of existing social norms and value commitments, as political actors articulate equivalential links among entities within a field of discourse. So, for example, the articulation of the Rights of Man and Citizen opens further arguments that extend that initial claim of equal rights to people of color, women, homosexuals, the physically disabled, and so forth. Building on poststructuralist theory, Laclau and Mouffe argue that hegemony functions by stabilizing meaning around a core signifier. However, that stability is partial at best because the social world is ultimately open, "a result," they write, "of the constant overflowing of every discourse by the infinitude of the field of discursivity" (1985, 112–13). Laclau and Mouffe's original synthesis of Gramsci and poststructuralism furnishes a base for their conception of radical democracy, which they see as the hegemonic struggle to extend democratic rights and practices to subaltern groups within a social space characterized by contingency and open-endedness.

In subsequent years, Mouffe has deepened her commitment to the idea of radical pluralism and an agonistic (inherently conflictual) model of liberal democracy. Laclau, by contrast, grew worried over a trend that their initial theory of hegemony does not address: The replacement of classic Marxism's class-based model of politics could succumb to a postmodern politics of identity, which proliferates and celebrates particularity. He became convinced that the revival of left-wing politics in the wake of Marxism's collapse depends on recovering a universalist dimension that would once again unify specific social struggles into a broader process of emancipation. Laclau's work in the 1990s and 2000s is dominated by the search for a viable notion of universality that could overcome the fragmentation of the Left while avoiding a simple relapse into foundationalist theories of meaning or deterministic logics of historical development. To this end, Laclau has extended their initial theory of hegemony in new and productive ways in an attempt to conceptualize universalism as a contingent process of social construction. Laclau first formulates this project in *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time* (1990). He defends his ideas in a spirited three-way exchange with Judith Butler and Slavoj Žižek in *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality* (2000), and he furthers his ideas in *Elusive Universality* (2010).

Warren Breckman

See also [Althusser, Louis](#); [Communism, Varieties of](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Gramsci, Antonio](#); [Ideology](#); [Latin American Political Thought](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Diego A. von Vacano Diego A. von Vacano

Latin American Political Thought

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Latin American Political Thought

Latin American political traditions are tied to, but different from, those of European political ideas. Because in many parts of Spanish and Portuguese America, there was also a large and significant influence of indigenous ideas into the political mindset of thinkers, it is difficult to classify Latin American political thought as coming purely out of the “Western” intellectual tradition. The Latin American way of looking at the political world is a fusion of indigenous beliefs with ideas derived from the Western European tradition. It is difficult to even unitarily quantify the Latin American region, both geographically and culturally, due to the deep diversity of cultures, ethnicities, races, religions, languages, and modes of life that have been present in the area since before the term was employed. However, as Zea (1991) has shown, a strong case can be made that the common trajectories and leitmotifs in the region can be construed as making up a generally coherent tradition of political ideas. The tradition is made up of three main components: political thought, political theory, and political philosophy. Political thought refers to less systematic works or traditions (such as pre-Columbian thought and also the vast literature of political fiction in the twentieth century); political theory to praxis intended to address particular political problems (such as Mariátegui’s writings on Peruvian reality); and the political philosophy to more general and universal concerns (such as Las Casas’s treatment of race). These three ways of intellectually considering the political world form a consistent, if highly eclectic intellectual tradition.

Pre-1492 and the Colonial Period

Before the emergence of the term *Latin America* in the 1830s in French social theory, there were political ideas of import in the region. The indigenous civilizations of the Inca, Aztecs, and Maya, among others, developed distinct moral, religious and political values that greatly differed from what the Spanish Conquistadores brought in the post-1492 era, upon the conquest of the Americas. For instance, the *Popol Vuh* and the *Chilam Balam*—sacred texts of the Maya—possess intricate and complex accounts of cosmology, ethics, religion, and social order. These ideas dominated much of the Yucatán peninsula and are extant today in areas like Chiapas and greatly influential in the political thought of thinkers such as Subcomandante Marcos and Rigoberta Menchú. The great Aztec Empire, a sophisticated political and military machine that used religion as a way to consolidate power, teaches us, *inter alia*, about the nature of imperial policy and administration. The tradition of the Incas also had continued influence. Unique concepts such as the *Pachamama*, or Mother Earth, positing a deep respect for nature and the universe as well as for ethical relations among humans, have lasted for centuries. *Ama sua, ama quella, ama llulla, ama llunk'a* (do not steal, do not be lazy, do not be a liar, and do not be servile) is a fundamental principle of Inca ethics that persists to this day in the ideas of thinkers like Evo Morales.

Latin American political thought as a distinct concept started with the arrival of the Spanish on the island of Hispanola. The New World as an idea could exist only with the discovery of the unknown and the conquest of the Americas. It was only with the contact with this New World that modernity could reach its full development, since it was the “discovery” of the Americas that led the world to begin its unification and globalization (see Dussel 1992). Modernity implies newness, change, and progress, and though the East had already made contact with Western Europe, it was the Americas that truly encapsulated those ideas. The violent conquest of the indigenous peoples by the Spanish generated many debates, such as the one between Bartolomé de las Casa and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda in Valladolid in 1550–51. For Las Casas, the Amerindians were not to be denied their full human dignity, despite having different cultures and being of different races (*linajes*) vis-à-vis Europeans. Sepúlveda argued that they were *homunculi*

or small, humanoid beings that were not fully human. Whether reason and culture were to be central in the definition of humanity was central to these debates, which heavily relied on Aristotelian natural law theory. The concept of Thomistic natural right was used heavily by both sides of the debate, as in the work of Francisco de Vitoria. Those who would defend the actions of the Spanish Empire, such as Juan Nuix, believed that the New World had great need of the influence of European culture and religion. While Las Casas shared this view, he did not agree with the idea of natural slavery or barbarism, which came out of Aristotelianism. Las Casas, because of this rejection of Aristotelian ideas, can be thought of as a figure helping the transition from the medieval world to the modern. Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, a seventeenth-century nun, poet and philosopher who lived in what is modern Mexico, was also crucial to the modernizing of ideas in the colonial time period. Her critique of Aristotelian patriarchy can be seen as a forerunner of feminism; she rejected the idea that men alone should be educated.

Nation-States and Republican Thought

The consistent and stable Spanish imperial rule suggests that Spain was able to maintain relative order and unity through the use of administrative mechanisms in the New World (Grafe 2011). There was certainly resistance, rebellion, and revolt among indigenous and Creole groups throughout this period, but the decline of Spanish domination truly began only in the early decades of the nineteenth century. In political thought, the eminent figure of the republican period is the Venezuelan statesman and military leader Simón Bolívar. Republican theory is indebted to the political ideas of the Great Liberator for various reasons. Principal among them is that he understood the ethnic and racial diversity as well as widespread miscegenation among the people of Spanish America. For him, this signified a new global phenomenon. It was at the same time a source of political stability (due to greater racial unity) but also of instability (due to gradations of mixing and ethnic competition). By using a Machiavellian form of martial republicanism that balanced the interests of elite Creoles with those of the *pardo* mass, he was able to unite the diverse political units of the Americas. While militarist in nature, Bolívar's thought was defined

by anti-imperialism, and warned against the growing imperial ambitions of the United States of America.

Concern over the growing influence of the United States can be seen in other thinkers of the nationalist period. Once the Bolivarian idea of *Gran Colombia* (a unified northern South America) failed, nation-states emerged, each with their own imperatives to define a unique identity. José Martí in Cuba shared Bolívar's concern for U.S. expansionism and urged the nascent Spanish republic to respect the freedom of the new Cuban republic. Martí declared that "there are no races," in *Nuestra América*, or "Our America" (referring to the Spanish American region, whose various regions, he believed, shared many cultural traits). Martí's poetry, journalism, and prose are early examples of the fusion of aesthetic modernism with politically *engagé* intellectual activity. The nationalist period also produced very diverse thinkers. Domingo Faustino Sarmiento in Argentina proposed the modernization of his country through the emulation of U.S. methods of pedagogy, the creation of a national myth of the gaucho to unify Argentines, and a critique of *caudillismo*, or rule by a strongman in his magnum opus, *Facundo*, which was an attack on Juan Manuel de Rosas, who ruled Argentina as governor from 1835 to 1852. However, despite being an eminent figure of liberalism, Sarmiento advocated the extermination of indigenous peoples. Another important liberal, Juan Alberdi, similarly believed that Latin American culture ought to be seen as purely European.

Venezuela's Laureano Vallenilla Lanz and other thinkers rejected the racism of Gobineau and recovered the idea of democratic Caesarism (influenced by French social theory) for countries deeply divided by poverty and racial differences. In effect, one of the major contributions of Latin American political thought is the frequent focus on the meanings and complications of the idea of race. Building on the seminal ideas of Las Casas and other colonial thinkers, subsequent *pensadores* developed new, alternative accounts of the role of race in politics and the creation of citizenship. Other than the explicitly racist perspectives of Sarmiento, Juan Alberdi, and others, there were also views that differed, such as the indigenismo of Alfonso Caso, Manuel Gamio, and Aguirre Beltrán. The writings of Renato Kehl, Fortuno Hernández, and Víctor Delfino also provided commentary on Eugenics.

Seminal figures of the nineteenth century include Andrés Bello, a Venezuelan-born Renaissance man who made contributions to legislation, philosophy, philology, pedagogy, humanism, and poetry. Considered an important figure of conservatism, he spent much of his life in Chile, where he worked on the Chilean Civil Code, which was similar to the Napoleonic Code. In London, he met Francisco de Miranda, the Venezuelan leader of independence. Miranda had been a forerunner of Bolívar in the battle for independence. Bello also consorted with important intellectuals such as José María Blanco and Vicente Rocafuerte. In Chile, he was an interlocutor of Victorino Lastarria and Francisco Bilbao.

Positivism and idealism were strong currents at the turn of the century. In Argentina, Agustín Suárez supported the scientific method and disregarded the ideas of metaphysics and theology. Carlos Octavio Bunge provided a social psychology of Spanish people as well as of various ethnic and racial groups of the Americas. José Ingenieros was an eminent proponent of positivist sociology. Alejandro Korn provided a critique of positivism, arguing that reality is a psychic phenomenon, and proffered a specifically Argentine philosophy in an effort to distance Latin American ideas from those of Europe. In Bolivia, the debate over race was intense. Alcides Arguedas's *Pueblo enfermo* is an account of the social psychology of Amerindians. While sometimes myopic and essentialist, it was widely influential at home and abroad. In Brazil, Euclides da Cunha provided a literary-psychological account of Brazilian national identity in *Os Sertões*, in a way that is similar to Sarmiento's *Facundo*. Parallel perspectives were provided by Manoel Bomfim and Gilberto Freyre, whose *Casa-grande e senzala* is considered a founding text of the theory of racial democracy and has been critiqued as overly optimistic by scholars such as Florestan Fernandes.

Liberalism is not as influential as in the United States, nor is it as preponderant as other political currents in Latin America; nonetheless, it is an important tradition in the Latin American history of ideas. While many have seen it as merely an import from Europe or the United States in lands more amenable to dictatorship and *caudillismo*, in fact there was widespread preoccupation with some core liberal issues in many countries, such as the separation of church and state, freedom of association, rights

over property, and free expression. Sarmiento and Alberdi proposed important liberal reforms in Argentina, while Mexico was a breeding ground for many innovative liberal thinkers. These include José María Luis Mora, Lucas Alamán, Francisco Zarco, and Benito Juárez. During the Porfiriato, near the end of the nineteenth century, eminent liberals like Justo Sierra, José María Vigil, and Emilio Rabasa consolidated the era of Mexican liberal thought.

Critical Perspectives on Positivism

Critiques of progressive nationalism began to emerge when the idea of the nation began to fail, especially with the shortcoming of the Mexican Revolution and its positivist ethos. German thought influenced the two major strands of this critique. One was the romantic aestheticism of thinkers such as José Vasconcelos and José Enrique Rodó, both of whom were influenced by Friedrich Nietzsche and G. W. F. Hegel. The other is Marxism; thinkers such as José Carlos Mariátegui, who was also influenced by Nietzsche and by the Leninist tradition, rejected the idea that the nationstate could be the main driving force for real progress for Latin America. Vasconcelos, profoundly anti-Marxist especially in his later years, believed the idea of racial identity could unify people better and give them meaning. His classic essay *La raza cósmica* is a cardinal, fraught text in Latin American thought. In it, he propounds a theory of racial synthesis, in which all the major “races” of the world become miscegenated to create a single one, in the Amazon basin, which then produces a beauty-centered, non-rational but higher culture. Ignorant of Amerindian ideas, and proposing the Christianization of the Americas, Vasconcelos’s key text is nonetheless a crucial critique of reified racial categories and of the moral values of the Anglo-Saxon world. In a similar critique of European materialism and individualism, Rodó rejects Nietzsche’s anti-Christian ethos but embraces his aestheticism.

For Mariátegui, whose ideas shared common ground with those of the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, the best method to reveal the realities of the Peruvian and Latin American world was Marxism. Spanish rule in the Americas had been fundamentally feudal, hence Latin America had never gone through a process of modernization. For the Peruvian *pensador*, the

agrarian question was the key to understanding the “Indian Problem.” Race as such was not the essence of the Latin American conundrum, as Vasconcelos believed; rather, the class conflict born out of quasi-feudal modes of production generated deep cleavages in each society. But the Marxism of Mariátegui was not orthodox. While he followed the Leninist idea of the importance of a vanguard and a proletarian political party, he argued that much of the work of the revolution could be carried out by engaged intellectuals and artists. Thus, the violence that had long been associated with Marxism was not necessary for the advent of the revolutionary society. In his writings on history, religion, and even Charlie Chaplin, Mariátegui showed how Marxism was not an ossified doctrine but rather a method to disassemble class oppression.

Mariátegui greatly influenced subsequent Marxist thinkers in Latin America. Given the levels of underdevelopment in the region, the Marxism that was adopted had to be of the unorthodox kind. Theoretically, the most prominent Marxist after Mariátegui is Ernesto “Che” Guevara. While a man of praxis and action, his writings on guerrilla warfare, imperialism, and the New Man are important innovations in Marxist theory. Guevara radicalized the importance of violence in Marxism, arguing for a complete commitment from revolutionaries and thereby rejecting the idea of “dirty hands” as a moral problem. He also intensified the critique of imperialism, claiming that it was not merely a capitalist product but could also emerge from within major Socialist states like the USSR. Moreover, his belief that praxis (critical, creative, human life-activity) could radically transform men and women into different kinds of beings through labor shows a profound humanism that is an ethical turn in Marxist theory. It rejects essentialism and naturalism, while it establishes a new code of ethics based on labor and participation. Guevara also urged for the greater unification of Spanish/Portuguese America, a motif that has roots in Bolívar. Further developments in Latin American Marxism reacted to Mariátegui and Guevara, including the guerrilla tactics of Carlos Marighella, the Trotskyism of Guillermo Lora in Bolivia, the socialist nationalism of Fidel Castro, and Haya de la Torre’s APRA movement.

Marxist Influence and the Aftermath

Marxism and neo-Marxism continued its strong influence on Latin American political thought throughout the twentieth century. The combination of a successful blueprint for the revolution as demonstrated in Cuba and the persistence of right-wing military governments provided enough inspiration for this continued influence. Before the Cuban revolution, the rule of Juan Domingo Perón in Argentina led to the rise of what has been called “populism,” a term widely used to characterize Latin American political rulers and movements since then. The term is generally used to describe the existence of an extremely charismatic leader who brings together a popular movement against elites, but this concept is under-theorized since this description can often apply to leaders in democratic politics as well. The paradigmatic cases are Perón and Getulio Vargas, both of whom had ties to the military and staunchly anti-Marxist positions. Populism requires a leader with charisma who uses demagoguery to stay in power and is largely devoid of ideology. The idea of favoring the poor in opposition to elites is an integral part of it, and due to the preponderance of poverty throughout Latin America, it has often been a highly influential concept.

The concern with poverty is visible in other political traditions as well. In Gustavo Gutiérrez’s *A Theology of Liberation*, published in 1973, he argued from a Dominican perspective that only through the eyes of Christ can one can understand scripture. This idea means that the poor should be favored. The “preferential option” for the poor is read both spiritually and literally by Gutiérrez: economic poverty is the result of oppression and exploitation. In part influenced by neo-Marxism, Gutiérrez argues that Christianity is about helping others, specifically the materially poor, because the reality of Christ is historicized, that is, moral values are not abstract but practical and real. They are the result of crises that emerge out of specific historical conditions. Thus, Gutiérrez called for reform within the Catholic Church, Christology (understanding and learning from the life of Christ), historicization (placing religious ideas on the real world), and a sense of urgency (the need to act and not merely reflect upon spiritual matters). Other liberation theologians like Leonardo Boff and Ernesto Cardenal share similar ideas, and they can also be seen in the liberation philosophy of Enrique Dussel, as well as in the critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire.

Freire's ideas were largely rooted in Hegel and historicized the master-slave dialectic by placing it in the classroom. Freire argued that oppression exists at the social level, and it is manifested in teaching techniques in mainstream pedagogy. For him, most professors simply lecture to students in a condescending manner, without any room for critical thinking. This "banking model" of education, in which teachers simply "deposit" information in passive students, creates automatons, not citizens. It instills a sense of inferiority and class-domination in students. Freire, like Gutiérrez, overturns the domination paradigm and urges for a different dialectic, one in which students teach and teachers learn as well. This method, influenced by Martí and Guevara, had significant influence in liberation pedagogy throughout the continent and provided a new model of education for democracy. Thinkers like Domitila Chungara of Bolivia posited similar concerns in Marxian-feminist language, in *testimonio* literature.

The influence of political economy on political thought in Latin America continued into the eighties. Dependency theory, an economic analysis of international trade, as well as neoliberal economic theory, had widespread political implications. Raúl Prebisch, an economist with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, argued that declining terms of trade for Latin American economies could not be easily surmountable. Prices of primary products rose at a much slower rate than those for capital goods. Therefore, Latin American economies, heavily dependent on imports, would be adversely affected in the long run by this structural condition of the world economy (Faletto and Cardoso 1979; dos Santos 1967). As a consequence of this economic theory, many political leaders opted for import-substitution industrialization (as proposed by Celso Furtado and others). At the expense of smaller industries, this policy choice generally favored large national industries, and created a large political class that was dependent on favoritism and clientelism. There were numerous social and economic consequences to this type of policy, instituted by many left-of-center regimes. As a result, in the mid-1980s, free-market, liberalization, and privatization recipes to counter hyper-inflation and stagnation were proposed by center-right economists, many of whom were influenced by the ideas of the economics department at the University of Chicago. The "Chicago Boys," who had had impact on the Chilean economy under Augusto Pinochet's rule in the 1970s, gained

renewed prominence by 1990. Economic issues have been a large factor in the development of Latin American political ideas. It is in the ceaseless debate on the role of the state in postwar economy that this is especially true, and the debate only grew after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Hernando de Soto and Alvaro Vargas Llosa, both of Peru, have been prominent advocates of greater liberalization and free market economy. The former has advocated the radical reduction of bureaucratic red tape to activate the dormant capital of the poor, while the latter has argued that the neoliberal reforms of the 1990s did not go far enough. Many supporters have been behind the use of these ideas.

A Mixed Tradition

Neoliberalism did not live up to its lofty promises. By the mid-1990s, while hyper-inflation was curbed in many countries, unemployment rose as a result of the privatization of state-owned enterprises. This caused social upheavals and political turmoil, which eventually led to a swing back to the center-left. After the experiments of the radical left in the 1960s and the experiments of the radical right in the 1970s and 1980s, there is now a wide variety of pragmatic center-left regimes in the region. A new era of socially conscious pragmatism and democratic socialism has resulted from the experiences of the past. Thinkers like Evo Morales and Alvaro García Linera in Bolivia have blended Marxian concerns with indigenous traditions. Others, like Leonardo Avritzer and Enrique Peruzzotti, have proposed pragmatic methods to promote deliberative democracy and participatory budgeting, which allows for greater grassroots democratization. Market-friendly states have also emerged as viable options, especially those of Chile and Brazil.

The development of Latin American political thought has been the result of years of experimentation. The varied approaches to the subject have produced a number of alternative models on development and of how best to operate within the political realm. The declining power of the Church and religion in politics in recent decades, the consolidation of democracy and the shrinking role of the military, as well as the unique ethnic and racial composition of the region, the growing power of social movements and movements toward gender equality, and the recent consideration of energy

and environmental concerns, have all shaped contemporary Latin American political ideas. In the near future, the continent will doubtless continue to provide further experiments in pragmatism (Unger 1997) and postmodern politics (Mignolo 1999), as it is the product of sundry influences from within and without. We can note that these are reflected in the region's rich literary tradition, in which fiction is often an expression of political ideas (as in the work of Gabriel García Márquez, Mario Vargas Llosa, Augusto Roa Bastos, Alejo Carpentier, Roberto Bolaño, and others).

Diego A. von Vacano

See also [Bolívar, Simón](#); [Castro, Fidel](#); [Class](#); [Freire, Paulo](#); [Liberalism](#); [Liberation Theology](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Nationalism](#); [Populism](#); [Positivism](#); [Race and Racism](#)

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Law and Political Thought

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Law and Political Thought

In the modern period, the most original and influential theories about law and politics were developed in connection with a set of far-reaching, interrelated questions about the definition of law, the purpose of law, the relationship between law and morality, and the existence of natural law and natural rights.

Montesquieu

Charles-Louis de Secondat, Baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu (1689–1755), published *The Spirit of the Laws* in 1748. In this widely read and highly influential work (it appeared in 22 editions within 18 months after its first publication), Montesquieu defines laws as “the necessary relations deriving from the nature of things.” Laws are both the relations that exist between God and created beings and the relations of these created beings to one another. For Montesquieu, it is possible to discern a uniformity in the relations between things, despite their wide diversity. Thus, although one body is capable of moving another body in various ways, such motion will always be in accordance with the relations of mass and velocity. A similar kind of uniformity in the midst of diversity can be found in human affairs. Even before humans make their own positive laws, there exist “possible relations of justice” that determine which actual relations between humans are just and which are unjust. For Montesquieu, there are thus laws of nature or natural laws that are grounded in the very nature of things and that

underlie true “relations of fairness” as they exist apart from any positive or human-made laws, and apart from the will of any sovereign.

Although affirming the existence of natural law, Montesquieu differs from previous thinkers who held that one or another form of government was the “most natural” for human beings. For Montesquieu, what is “most natural” is not that which is “most common” or “most basic” but what is most in accord with a thing’s nature or its internal principle of activity. Just as individual things have their own natures, so too a people or a nation can be said to have a nature or “character” or “general spirit” of its own. The general spirit of a people emerges in connection with a wide variety of particular conditions pertaining to that people, including their climatic and geographical situation, their way of life, their degree of liberty, their religion, their level of wealth, the size of their population, their modes of commerce, and their mores and manners. When contemplating acts of legislation, says Montesquieu, legislators should not be guided by abstract, rationalistic ideas about justice but by the general spirit of the people for whom the legislation is intended. Law is most effective, after all, when it is least coercive and most suited to a people’s “natural genius.” Furthermore, legislators should not try to correct all the mores and manners of a people but only those that are manifestly unjust or harmful. Even when some mores and manners stand in need of correction, it is best if political leaders aim to correct them, not by relying on the coercive force of the law but by appealing to other mores and manners already recognized by the people.

One of Montesquieu’s best-known contributions to legal and political theory is his argument for a “separation of powers” within the state. Montesquieu identifies three possible kinds of powers within the state: the legislative power, the executive power over the things depending on the right of nations (or simply “the executive power”), and the executive power over the things depending on civil right (or simply “the judicial power”). If political liberty is to be preserved, Montesquieu argues, then these three powers must be vested in different individuals or different bodies, each acting independently of the other two. If individuals are to have political liberty, says Montesquieu, then the government and laws must be arranged so that no citizen stands in fear of any other citizen. Such becomes

impossible, however, when two or more of the state's powers are vested in a single individual or in a single body.

Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws* was praised by radical progressives such as Voltaire (who appreciated Montesquieu's observations about religious diversity and tolerance) but also by traditionalist conservatives such as Edmund Burke (who shared Montesquieu's skepticism about affecting social change through coercive legal means). The influence of Montesquieu's thought regarding the separation of powers is readily discernible in the *Instruction* of Catherine the Great of Russia, in the *Federalist Papers* (especially nos. 47 through 51), in the American Constitution, and in the French *Declaration of the Rights of Man*.

William Blackstone

The work of William Blackstone (1723–80) is important not so much for its originality as a piece of legal theory as for its originality as a work of systematization. Blackstone's four-volume work, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, was first published in England between 1765 and 1769 and then in the United States between 1771 and 1772. The *Commentaries* gave systematic form to a vast range of previously disconnected legal questions, showing how almost every aspect of English law could be analyzed and explained through the basic principles of a "rational science" of law. This "rational science" was divided into four parts, focusing on "the rights of persons" (Book I); "the rights of things," by which Blackstone meant the rights that people can have in things (Book II); "private wrongs," including torts (Book III); and "public wrongs," including crimes against other citizens, against God, and against religion (Book IV).

Blackstone defines law as "a rule of action dictated by some superior being." As applied to human action, laws are the precepts by which humans are commanded how to regulate their behavior. For Blackstone, human beings are obliged to obey the laws given to them by God, for an inferior being is inevitably obliged to follow the rules of conduct given to it by the superior being on which it depends. But human beings are not only *obliged* to obey the will of God, they are naturally *inclined* to do so as well. This is because God, in His infinite wisdom and goodness, constituted human

beings so that they would need no inducement to follow the law of nature other than their own self-love, which is the “universal principle” of human action. According to Blackstone, the rule of obedience for all human action can be reduced to one precept, which constitutes the foundation of all ethics or natural law: “[M]an should pursue his own true and substantial happiness” (1765, Vol. I, 41).

For Blackstone, the precepts of the natural law are universally binding on all human beings, regardless of time or place. All positive, or human-made, laws derive their force and authority from the natural law; human laws that are contrary to the natural law can have no validity. If humans were always clear and unprejudiced in their reasoning, they could know how to act by relying on their natural reason and their natural inclinations alone. But since humans are prone to ignorance and error, they need the further guidance of revealed or divine law, which God has provided through the scriptures. But the natural law and the divine law, on their own, are insufficient for guiding human conduct. This is because humans are neither self-sufficient nor courageous enough to live entirely on their own; they need to live in society with one another. Since it is impossible for all human beings to be united within a single, comprehensive society, they end up forming a multiplicity of separate, but interacting, states. Accordingly, there arises not only the need for municipal law or civil law (which governs the relations prevailing within a single state), but also the need for a “law of nations” or *jus gentium* (which governs the relations of different states to one another).

Municipal or civil law, says Blackstone, is a rule of civil conduct prescribed by the supreme power within a state. For Blackstone, the primary aim of human society and thus of municipal law is to protect individuals in their enjoyment of the “absolute rights” they possess simply in virtue of the immutable laws of nature. These absolute rights include the rights to personal security, to personal liberty, and to personal property. No human legislature has the power to abridge or destroy these rights, says Blackstone, unless their possessor has committed an act that amounts to a forfeiture of such rights. A secondary aim of human society and thus of municipal law is to protect individuals in their enjoyment of “social” or “relative” rights (e.g., the right to trial by jury), which result from and are posterior to the formation of states and societies.

The municipal law of England can be subdivided into two kinds: “the unwritten common law” and “the written or statute law.” Because written law is expressed in general and not particular terms, it follows that no written law can fully anticipate the concrete circumstances under which it might be applied. Thus, the determination of what a written law actually commands in some particular circumstance will require some recourse to the rationale or justification behind the law. Since only intelligent beings can discern when and how the law’s rationale might apply, “it is necessary that when the general decrees of the law come to be applied to particular cases, there should be somewhere a power vested of defining those circumstances” for applying the law (1765, Vol. I, 62). Thus, there arises the need for judges, who are authorized to decide cases in light of “equity” by taking into consideration the particular circumstances surrounding individual cases. If the rationale or justification behind a written law ceases to apply, says Blackstone, then “the law also ceases with it” (*Commentaries*, 1767, Vol. III, 219; 1765, Vol. I, 61). For Blackstone, the unwritten “common law,” as embodied in the understandings, practices, and customs of judges, can never be supplanted by a system of written law or “statute law.” When deciding cases in light of equity, Blackstone goes on to argue, judges generally should follow past precedents; however, judges may disregard previous decisions when they are manifestly absurd or unjust. This is not because such previous decisions are instances of bad law; rather, it is because—being contrary to reason or justice—they are not law at all.

Blackstone’s *Commentaries* were exceedingly influential at the time of the American founding, and they were regularly cited by those in favor of ratifying the American Constitution (e.g., by Alexander Hamilton, in *Federalist* nos. 69 and 84) as well as by those opposed to ratification (e.g., by Patrick Henry, who argued, in reliance on Blackstone, that the Constitution should provide for jury trials in civil cases). Blackstone’s *Commentaries* remained a staple of Anglophone legal education for the next 150 years.

Jeremy Bentham

In 1763, Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) attended the Oxford University lectures given by Blackstone that were later to become part of the latter’s

Commentaries on the Laws of England. But unlike Blackstone, who sought to explain and justify English law, Bentham was interested primarily in critique and reform. And unlike both Montesquieu and Blackstone, whose main contributions to legal thought can be found in individual works, Bentham disseminated his key ideas about law and politics through a vast collection of disparate writings, including *A Fragment on Government* (1776), *A Defence of Usury* (1787), *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789), *An Essay on Political Tactics* (1791), *Panopticon, or the Inspection House* (1787), *Emancipate Your Colonies* (1793), *Catechism of Parliamentary Reform* (1809), *Punishments and Rewards* (1811), *A Table of the Springs of Action* (1815), *Chrestomathia* (1816), *Church of Englandism and Its Catechism Examined* (1818), *Radicalism is Not Dangerous* (1819–20), and *A Treatise on Judicial Evidence* (1825). A summary of Bentham's criticisms of Blackstone can be found in his *Fragment on Government*, which is a shortened version of a more extensive critique, *Comments on the Commentaries*, published posthumously in 1928.

What we call law, says Bentham, is not grounded in the nature of things or in the divine ideas of an all-benevolent God; it is grounded instead in the will of a sovereign (whether this be an individual or a group) that has the power to command its subjects to act in certain ways, and to induce obedience in its subjects by means of punishments and rewards. For Bentham, the purpose of human law cannot be to protect any "natural" order of justice or "natural" rights as they allegedly exist apart from positive laws and apart from the will of a sovereign. This is because there are no such things as "natural" rights or "natural" justice in the first place. According to Bentham, a "right" is nothing other than an actual "security" enjoyed by someone under the protection of some more powerful person or body (such as the sovereign). It follows from this that there is no such thing as a right that is not an enforceable right; and no such thing as justice that is not enforceable justice. For Bentham, then, the positive law does not protect preexisting rights or enforce preexisting duties that persons allegedly have in a state of nature or as a matter of natural right; on the contrary, it is the positive law that brings into existence all the rights and duties that persons have in the first place. The ideas of law, offense, right, and obligation, says Bentham, "are born together" and are inseparably connected.

According to Bentham, proponents of “natural law” jurisprudence (including Blackstone) systematically failed to distinguish between “expositorial” (or merely descriptive) jurisprudence and “censorial” (or evaluative) jurisprudence. As a result, they also failed to distinguish between the law as it *is* and the law as it *should* be. On account of these confusions, “natural law” thinkers were led to the erroneous view that law, in order to exist at all, must be in accord with reason and justice and, conversely, that supposedly “bad” laws—being contrary to reason and justice—could not really exist as laws at all. Against such “natural law” reasoning, Bentham argued that it is obvious that “bad” laws can exist. For a law, after all, is nothing other than the command of a sovereign backed by the threat of force. It is obvious that a command can be issued, and those subject to it can be induced to obey, even if there is nothing “reasonable” or “just” about the command being issued. By arguing that the existence of law is one thing and its moral merit is another (or that there is “no necessary connection” between law and morality), Bentham laid the theoretical groundwork for what has since come to be known as modern “legal positivism.”

Bentham opposed “natural law” reasoning, not only because he regarded it as deeply confused as a matter of theory, but he also believed that it supported perniciously antireformist consequences in the realm of practice. If bad law is no law at all, as the “natural law” theorists held, then it becomes difficult to see how actual existing laws could be “bad” and thus in need of reform. For Bentham, it is only by acknowledging that “bad” laws can exist that we will be in a position to begin reforming them. Furthermore, the question of how bad laws should be reformed is not to be settled by reference to an empty, abstract, speculative account of “natural law”; instead, it is to be settled by reference to a readily accessible and easily understandable standard of right and wrong, namely, the principle of utility. According to this principle, an action is right to the extent that it tends to produce pleasure or happiness and wrong to the extent that it tends to produce pain or unhappiness. For Bentham, the actions of all individual and all legal regimes are to be measured and judged in accordance with the principle of utility or “the greatest happiness principle.” The guiding purpose of the law should be nothing other than to promote social welfare or utility or “the greatest happiness for the greatest number.”

Bentham's commitment to the principle of utility led him to hold that legal punishments could be justified only on the grounds that they incentivize good behavior and deter bad behavior in those who are subject to the law. As a result, he argued that legal punishment was not for the sake of retribution, and he sought to reform many of England's often-cruel penal practices that had been based on retributivist ideas about punishment. Bentham's belief in the principle of utility also led him to argue in favor of replacing the unwritten "common law" of England with a fully written, codified system of statutory law. Because the "common law" was unwritten and depended so heavily on the unpredictable, discretionary rulings of judges, it failed to provide legal subjects with sufficient advance guidance about how they should conduct themselves; and when the law fails in this way, he noted, it cannot properly serve to incentivize good behavior and deter bad behavior. Bentham famously derided England's regime of unwritten, judge-made "common law" as a regime of arbitrary, *ex post facto* law-making that was more suited to dogs than to human beings:

When your dog does anything you want to break him of, you wait till he does it, and then you beat him for it. This is the way you make laws for your dog: and this is the way the judges make law for you and me. They won't tell a man beforehand what it is he *should not do* (1843, 235).

A lover of neologisms (he invented the now-common words, "codification," "minimize," "maximize," and "international"), Bentham made a number of innovative proposals for concrete legal and social reform, including what he called a *Pannomion* (a complete and systematic code of laws that would leave no room for unreliable guesswork by citizens or arbitrary discretion by judges) and a *Panopticon* (a building whose design included a central observation tower allowing authorities at prisons, asylums, schools, and workhouses to see all of their charges all at once, without in turn being seen). In 1794, the English Parliament agreed to fund Bentham's Panopticon plan for a new prison, to be managed by Bentham himself (foundations for the prison were laid, but in 1804, the project was terminated on account of insufficient funding). Bentham's thought exerted a substantial influence over the later utilitarian and social reformist

philosophies of James Mill (1773–1836), John Stuart Mill (1806–73), Henry Sidgwick (1838–1900), and Alexander Bain (1818–1903).

Bentham’s positivistic jurisprudence helped to inspire the later legal positivism of John Austin (1790–1859), Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. (1841–1935), Hans Kelsen (1881–1973), H. L. A. Hart (1907–92), and Joseph Raz (1939–). Bentham’s utilitarian jurisprudence is the distant precursor to the “law and economics” school of contemporary legal theory, championed in its early days by Ronald Coase (1910–), Guido Calabresi (1932–), and Richard Posner (1939–).

Immanuel Kant

For Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), theorizing about the law cannot be based simply on our experientially derived judgments about human desires or needs since our merely empirical judgments can never yield the necessity and universality that are the true hallmarks of a genuine science of right. Instead, jurisprudence must take its bearings from the nonempirical or *a priori* concept of “right” (*Recht*) as such. According to its pure or *a priori* concept, “right” is the sum of the conditions under which the free choice of one person can be united with the free choice of others in accordance with a universal law. The “universal law of right” stipulates that persons may rightfully perform external actions only to the extent that the exercise of their free choice through such actions can coexist with the free choice of everyone else in accordance with a universal law. For Kant, the concept of right is necessarily connected with the authorization to use force or coercion (e.g., through the use of law). For a person acts wrongly when he or she hinders the free choice of someone else. Such a hindrance amounts to an act of coercion by the wrong-doer; for when the wrongdoer hinders the freedom of another, the wrongdoer forces the wronged party to do or refrain from doing something entirely apart from the wronged party’s own act of choosing. Now if one person’s use of freedom amounts to an act of hindering the freedom of another, then the use of coercion to prevent such a hindrance (the hindering of a hindrance to freedom or the coercive prevention of coercion) is justified.

Prior to Kant’s time, it was common to think that the coercion of free persons by means of the law was justifiable on the grounds that freedom

must be limited or compromised at times for the sake of achieving goods that are external to freedom itself. These goods might include the cultivation of individual virtue or the promotion of social welfare. Kant, however, rejects such an approach. For Kant, it is always wrong to coerce free persons for the sake of promoting goods that are external to freedom itself; for it is always wrong to use a person as a mere means to some end, even if the end for which the person is being used is an exceedingly important one. Significantly, Kant observes that what is right or justified does not pertain to relations between persons and external objects; it pertains instead to relations among persons. Although one person may never rightfully be used as a mere means for another person's ends, there is nothing about external objects as such that makes it wrong for persons to use them as mere means in the service of the ends that they freely set for themselves. Furthermore, free persons must be permitted to make use of external objects even when the objects being used are not in the spatial vicinity, or under the physical control, of the persons making use of them. Just as there is nothing about external objects as such that makes it wrong for persons to use them as means in the service of the ends that they freely set for themselves, so too there is nothing about the merely contingent *empirical conditions* of such objects (e.g., the merely contingent fact that the object exists in a certain spatial location or beyond the scope of a person's physical control over it) that can legitimately prohibit them from being used by persons in the service of their ends.

For Kant, in other words, it is necessary that persons be permitted to make use of external objects, not only through their *empirical* possession of such objects, but also through what Kant calls their *intelligible* or *noumenal* possession of them. To have intelligible possession of an external object, says Kant, is to have possession of it even when the person who possesses the object is not spatially adjacent to or physically in control of the object being possessed. Significantly, Kant argues that such intelligible possession of objects cannot be secured in a state of nature. For in a state of nature, says Kant, there is no generally accepted public authority for determining how the intelligible possession of external objects is to be acquired, enforced, and arbitrated in cases of disagreement. As a result, a person's ability to make use of an external object in a state of nature is forever insecure, dependent always on merely contingent empirical conditions, such

as whether the person is strong, smart, or lucky enough to keep the external object from being appropriated and used by others. But this is just to say that in a state of nature, all possession is something *other* than rightful possession.

For Kant, persons are obliged to exit the state of nature and enter into a civil condition, or a “condition of right” under the rule of law. They are obliged to do so, not because doing so will help them to secure ends that are external to freedom itself (e.g., the ends of cultivating individual virtue or promoting of social welfare). Instead, argues Kant, free persons are obliged to live in a civil condition (and, incidentally, obliged not to destroy this civil condition by means of revolution) since it is only in a civil condition that they can fulfill their vocation as free persons; for it is only in a civil condition that they can rightfully make use of external objects in pursuing the ends that they freely set for themselves. For Kant, the aim of the law is to make possible the conditions of free personhood as such, and not to promote ends that are external to free personhood. Kant’s theory of law thus stands opposed to all “welfarist” or “utilitarian” conceptions of the law. Kant’s jurisprudential thought, with its emphasis on the importance of free personhood (and the relative unimportance of promoting individual virtue or social welfare), has influenced several twentieth-century jurisprudential thinkers. The most famous of these thinkers, including some who depart in one way or another from Kant’s strict *a priori*, anti-welfarist theory of right, are John Rawls (1921–2002), Robert Nozick (1938–2002), Ronald Dworkin (1931–), and T. M. Scanlon (1940–).

Friedrich Carl von Savigny (1779–1861) was an early admirer of Kant, but inspired by post-Kantian Romanticism, he ended up rejecting what he regarded as the overly rationalistic, unhistorical character of Kantian jurisprudence. As a leading proponent of the German “historical school” of jurisprudence, Savigny went on to argue that the nature and origins of “right” should be understood not by reference to any nonempirical or *a priori* concept but by reference to the historically situated, empirically accessible *Volksgeist*, or “spirit of a people.” Another early follower of Kant, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831), sought to develop a theory of law that would correct both the overly rationalistic character of Kantian jurisprudence as well as the overly empiricist character of

Savigny's "historical" approach. According to Hegel, Kant erred by failing to realize that the abstract, free personhood with which he *began* his "science of right" was not the pure, unhistorical personhood that he took it to be but instead only the *result* of a long, historical process of self-transformation through labor and social interaction. If Kant had understood the underlying logic of human self-transformation through labor and social interaction, he would not have been so firmly committed to the false and dualistic belief that the law's purpose can be only to make possible the conditions of free personhood, and not to promote social welfare. Karl Marx (1818–83) famously developed Hegel's thought to argue that the dynamics of labor and social interaction not only make possible free personhood and legality as they exist but also will bring about social revolution and emancipation in the future. Until that occurs, says Marx, law will continue to serve as an ideological instrument for the oppression of one economic class by another. In the twentieth century and beyond, Marx's ideological-critical assessment of the law has been adopted and transformed by many different legal theorists (e.g., proponents of critical legal studies, critical race theory, and feminist legal theory) who have argued that the law can serve in various ways as an ideological instrument for oppressing persons on the basis of class, race, and gender.

Michael Baur

See also [Bentham, Jeremy](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich](#); [International Law](#); [Justice](#); [Kant, Immanuel](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Montesquieu, Baron de](#); [Natural Law](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Obedience, Political](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Rawls, John](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [Utilitarianism](#)

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Claude Lefort (1924–2010) played a major role in the revival of French political philosophy in the 1970s and 1980s. As a youth in Paris during World War II, Lefort studied with the philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty, whose phenomenological approach deeply influenced Lefort's political thought. In the early 1940s, Lefort was briefly involved with Trotskyist groups, but he quickly grew critical. With Cornelius Castoriadis, Lefort initiated a break from Trotskyism that led to the founding of the group and journal *Socialisme ou Barbarie* in 1948. As a member of this ultra-left libertarian group, Lefort opposed not only the Soviet Union and the French Communist Party but also fellow travelers like Jean-Paul Sartre. After years of fraught relations with Castoriadis, Lefort left *Socialisme ou Barbarie* in the early 1960s over disagreements about the nature and role of militant politics. Parallel to his political engagements, Lefort pursued a university career, teaching at several universities until his election to the prestigious École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in 1976. In 1971, he completed a massive dissertation on Niccolò Machiavelli under the supervision of Raymond Aron. His preferred writing form is the essay, and many of his important texts are translated into three volumes, *The Political Forms of Modern Society: Bureaucracy, Democracy, Totalitarianism*; *Democracy and Political Theory*; and *Writing: The Political Test*.

A long-term critic of totalitarian regimes, Lefort gained prominence as a theorist of liberal democracy in the 1970s when many French intellectuals grew disillusioned with communism and Marxism more generally. Lefort's

mature thought centers on three major claims. First, the proper goal of political philosophy is not to understand “politics” as a particular sector of social life but to explore the “political,” which he defines as the basic framework that operates as the formative or generative principle of the social experience itself. Second, this framework is a symbolic construct: In contrast to Marxists, who would argue that power rests on a base of material relations, Lefort maintains that power functions only through representation. Third, and again in contrast to Marxism, division and conflict are ineradicable dimensions of social experience.

Lefort’s work is best seen not as an attempt to provide liberal democracy with new or renewed normative foundations but as an effort to identify the formative principles of democratic pluralism. This search leads him back to a basic position advanced by Alexis de Tocqueville: What is most important about democracy is not what it *does*, but what it *causes to be done*, namely, its power to arouse constant agitation in people. Democracy’s core lies not in a particular set of institutions acting in a certain way but in the open, indeterminate, and unmasterable process that democracy generates. Lefort traces this power of democracy to a “symbolic mutation” in the order of power. Earlier forms of society sought to conceal or overcome conflict through symbolic representations of power as a unity; so, for example, the early modern monarch symbolically incarnated the body politic in the unity of his or her body. In the struggle against monarchy climaxing in the French Revolution, power underwent a radical disincorporation in the name of egalitarian social relations. In Lefort’s famous formulation, the symbolic center of modern democratic power is a *lieu vide*, an *empty place*. Democratic power may be contested, and specific people exercise power. However, no one can permanently appropriate or incarnate democratic power, nor can such power be definitively represented. Democracy is, therefore, not a regime governed by fixed laws or an unquestioned legitimate power. Rather, it is a regime based on the legitimacy of a *debate* as to what is legitimate; and this debate is without any final guarantor or terminus. Totalitarianism is, in Lefort’s view, the modern counterpart of democracy because regimes like Nazism or Stalinism tried once again to conceal social division by reinvesting power in the symbol of the Nation, Party, Race, or Leader. Liberal democracy, by contrast, is an original form of society in which social division is the essence of its political logic. Once

the markers of certainty that situated people in relation to each other have been lost, the conflict of opinion and the debate over rights become interminable.

Basing his thought on the collapse of transcendent sources of political legitimacy, Lefort created an original and highly influential theory of democracy, which illuminates the nature of sovereignty, the role of symbolic representation in politics, and the dynamic expansion of civil and human rights in the modern democratic era.

Warren Breckman

See also [Communism](#), [Varieties of](#), [Democratic Theory](#), [French Political Thought](#), [Marx, Karl](#), [Tocqueville, Alexis de](#), [Totalitarianism](#), [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Legitimacy

In the political context, legitimacy amounts to the governed recognizing the right of the governors to lead and, to a certain extent, their entitlement to the perks of power. It is a process through which both political power and obedience are justified. Yet, it is not as if the recognition of the right to govern is without constraints on those who govern. Conditions have to be met for the acknowledgment and justification of the right to govern—that is, for legitimacy—to develop. Three come to mind: First, those in power must deliver services to the governed. These services may vary from one society to another, from one period to another, but they are requirements that cannot be overlooked. Second, the services provided have to respond to and reasonably satisfy the key needs (of which security is an essential one) of the governed. These needs are themselves associated with the sense of the possible and the values (and the expectations they create) that are constitutive of the identity of society. As such, they are crystallized in the rights of people. Third, the needs/rights benchmark the responsibility and accountability of those in the position of command as well as of that of the political institutions, including the procedures of exercise of power and of how they oversee the general arrangements of society.

The emergence of democratic values in the second half of the eighteenth century and their increasing importance ever since have emphasized these elements as central aspects of modern political legitimacy. Today the perception of political legitimacy comes down to the distribution of power being seen as expressing, defending, and promoting justice, understood as

the fair allocation of, and access to, resources and opportunities (political, but also legal, economic, cultural, and others) resulting from relevant actors, with the attribution of rights and duties that comes with it. In this perspective, when political leaders and institutions, and the social system they underwrite, are viewed as unjust, and consequently illegitimate, it is not surprising that challenging social injustice and the political order becomes one and the same thing.

Authority being defined as legitimate power, and thus distinct from naked coercion, two contrasting dynamics of authority can be identified throughout history. First, when the legitimacy of leaders and institutions decreases and thus threatens the scope of authority, leaders are tempted to increase their use of coercion to maintain or restore their authority. But increasing coercion typically leads to further decreases in legitimacy, and thus, a downward spiral of legitimacy and authority ensues. By contrast, a second dynamic occurs in the absence of organized power, after a revolution, internal collapse, defeat in war, or natural disaster. In such a condition of chaos, those who newly assert their power and use it to provide for citizens' critical needs of survival and security are likely to win increasing legitimacy in the eyes of the people thus served. In turn, the new leaders' increased legitimacy is likely to further increase their power—and so on, in an upward spiral of increasing legitimacy and authority.

In neither of these dynamics, nor in general, should one infer that political legitimacy is without ambiguity or is pure. Nor should we believe that the relationship between power and legitimacy is a unilateral one, functioning to make power essentially positive because of the constraints political legitimacy imposes on it. History shows that regimes of legitimacy emanate from a position of power often initially acquired by brutal means, which, over time, through legitimization, the winners work on strengthening and perpetuating as much as possible vis-à-vis the losers. Although legitimacy (rightful rule) and accountability (popular control) tend to be associated, they should not be equated, and unaccountable, authoritarian regimes have often proved stable over long periods of time. The longterm, often tortuous process of legitimation makes the relations between legitimacy and power, on the one hand, and between legitimacy and justice, on the other, dynamic, tense, and complex. From a democratic perspective, the virtue and the

appeal of political legitimacy are to keep power under check by factoring in the rights of the governed. A continual challenge to legitimacy is its association with and closeness to power, which put it in danger of being captured by the self-serving dynamics of power, at both the national and international levels.

Historically, because international relations are anarchic, it is mainly in the national realm that the issue of political legitimacy has gained preeminence. This focus is also related to the fact that in modern times, starting with European societies, social integration and socialization have first and foremost taken place through the establishment of state authority at the national level. Max Weber, the emblematic analyst of legitimacy, roots it in tradition, legality, and charisma, while subsequent events suggest two additional, related but distinct, sources of political legitimacy: expertise (“We should govern because we are knowledgeable and talented”) and some concept of the Good (“We should govern because we stand for the purity of the Aryan race, or the will of Allah, or equal rights for all”).

In Weber’s view, there was nothing beyond or above the state, an assumption that excluded the theoretical possibility of international norms and institutions encouraging and allowing states to transcend their differences and thus achieve durable reconciliation of international legitimacy. However, from the primacy of national legitimacy, it does not follow that political legitimacy is absent internationally. The specific conditions of international relations generate major issues of legitimacy, especially in connection with the projection of power internationally and with international human rights. Issues raised by just-war theory and, in recent decades, the growing significance of democratic values as measures of international legitimacy illustrate this point.

Jean-Marc Coicaud

See also [Authority](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [International Law](#); [International Relations Theory and Political Thought](#); [Obedience](#), [Political](#); [Power](#); [Sovereignty](#), [State](#); [Weber](#), [Max](#)

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Christopher Read Christopher Read

Lenin and Leninism

Lenin and leninism

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Lenin and Leninism

Vladimir Il'ich Ulianov, better known by his revolutionary codename, Lenin, was born in the provincial Russian town of Simbirsk on April 22, 1870. He was born into a prosperous, privileged, and intellectual middle-class family. As a child, Ulianov/Lenin lived a cultured and warm family life. Perhaps the first question that arises, then, is why did Lenin later become a passionate revolutionary? Essentially, there are two overarching reasons. First, the antiquated social, political, and economic systems of Russia were no longer fit for purpose. By the 1880s, the crucial decade in Lenin's development, the government had turned to anti-Semitism and repression to maintain its authority. Increasingly, educated observers became alienated from it and looked to foreign models of democratic and law-based government as a necessary next step for Russia. By clamping down on civic freedoms, the autocracy created its own enemies and, by refusing any dialogue with them, turned them into extremists. A second factor was also important. The eldest of the Ulianov children, Alexander, became a revolutionary at the University of St. Petersburg. He was arrested; convicted of plotting to assassinate the current tsar, Alexander III; and executed in May 1887. It seems that this trauma, not surprisingly, fired up a visceral lifelong hatred of the autocracy in the young Lenin. The conventional child turned to his brother's radical literature and took the first steps to becoming the adult revolutionary. In particular, he encountered the utopian novel *What Is to Be Done: Tales of the New People* (1864), by the populist economist Nikolai Chernyshevsky, along with political luminaries

such as Karl Marx, Michael Bakunin, Alexander Herzen, and Vissarion Belinsky. He also read scientific literature. Charles Darwin was massively influential among the rising radical intelligentsia. Significantly, Alexander Ulianov had been studying biology.

The Evolving Revolutionary

In 1887, Lenin briefly left home to take up a place at the University of Kazan but was soon expelled in a political clampdown. Instead, he studied law by correspondence at the University of St. Petersburg, graduating at the top of his class in January 1892. His political activities soon outweighed his professional ones, and in the early 1890s, he affiliated with the social democratic wing of the revolutionary movement, writing his first known articles criticizing the populists and identifying workers rather than peasants as the revolutionary class of the future. He took a trip abroad to meet socialist luminaries such as Georgi Plekhanov, Karl Liebknecht, and Paul Lafargue in western Europe and returned ready to help found Russia's first social democratic organization, the St. Petersburg League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class in 1895. The group and Lenin's involvement with it were short-lived. He was arrested and sentenced to exile in Siberia, where he was joined by Nadezhda Krupskaya, who became his lifelong partner and wife. Ironically, Lenin's years of exile were among the happiest and most settled of his life. His perennial, often stress-induced nervous illnesses that peppered his later life were held in abeyance in these years. He was also able to write, producing his first major work *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*. A key problem for Russian Marxists was what was called the "backwardness" of Russia. For Marx, revolution was the outcome of the deadlock of advanced capitalism. In Russia, capitalism had hardly emerged. It was an important thesis of social democracy's populist opponents that Russia could avoid the epoch of capitalism and move directly to socialism because of the specific conditions within Russia, notably the existence of collective instincts and institutions such as the peasant *obshchina* (commune) and the worker and artisan *artel'* (collective work group). In *Development*, Lenin attempted to show the irrelevance of this debate by demonstrating that capitalism was already widespread in Russia and there was no chance of skipping the capitalist stage of development.

His release from exile in February 1900 was quickly followed by emigration to western Europe, where he spent all but two years until April 1917 living successively in London, Geneva, Paris, Krakow, Berne, and Zurich. In 1900, Lenin established the first of a series of newspapers that were the focus of his activities in exile. It was called *Iskra*, meaning “The Spark,” from which, implicitly, the wildfire of revolution would ignite.

In 1902 and 1903, Lenin took two decisive steps in his own self-definition. In 1902, he produced a pamphlet whose title, *What Is to Be Done?*, was borrowed from Chernyshevsky. In essence, Lenin argued that the working class, if left to itself, would only develop “trade-union consciousness,” which would make it content to strive for improvements extracted from capitalism when its underlying condition could only be alleviated by the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist system as a whole. To promote revolution, there needed to be a central core of “professional revolutionaries” to lead it. He also argued that in Russian conditions, the revolutionary party should be conspiratorial. He rejected the argument that it should be open to make it accessible to the masses. Such a structure, he said, would make it “accessible to the police.” There has been extensive debate, then and now, about exactly what Lenin meant. Some have seen it as the foundation of Bolshevism, Leninist totalitarianism, and the centralized, one-party state. Others, however, point out that the work was initially welcomed within the social democratic movement and seen to be orthodox not heretical. Lenin’s example of “professional revolutionaries” came from the German Social Democratic Party, not from extreme, violent radicals. What Lenin was mainly advocating was a transition from the “intellectual circle” (*kruzhok*) mentality, which had hitherto prevailed among revolutionaries in Russia, to the formation of a regular political party. This led to the second step. At the Second Congress of the party, Lenin attempted to engineer a split that resulted in the formation of Bolshevik (majoritarian) and Menshevik (minoritarian) factions. Despite their names, the Bolsheviks were actually the minority until the second half of 1917 and the completeness of the “split” is questionable since there were regular attempts at reunification even in 1917. Henceforth, Lenin was not a subordinate member of a group but always the leader of his own faction and, eventually, party. In 1904, he wrote a further pamphlet, *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*, the tone of which was more overtly anti-

intellectual and pro-workerist than *What Is to Be Done?* itself and, as such, is a repository of supposedly “Leninist” themes that are often associated with the earlier work but can scarcely be found in it.

In 1905, the long-awaited revolution broke out in Russia. However, Lenin’s actions and responses in the years of turmoil were surprisingly muted. He was content to observe the key events from afar and only returned to Russia in November 1905 when the revolutionary peak had already passed and repression was gaining the upper hand. Within four weeks of arrival, he was forced to go underground and spent the next two years in semi-concealment in the newly autonomous territory of Finland, from where he made occasional forays into St. Petersburg and beyond to speak, often in disguise, at rallies and the like. As ever, journalism was his main preoccupation and he continued to produce a prodigious number of articles. In December 1907, he decided to leave the Russian Empire once again and, at risk to his life, crossed heaving and cracking sea-ice, to evade surveillance and take the ferry from Finland to Sweden.

In the “decade of despair” (1907–17), Lenin remained in exile and occupied himself with developing his faction of the party, including promoting the most decisive break so far by calling his own party conference in Prague in 1912. However, his main activity was still writing and organizing newspapers, the most important being *Pravda* (“Truth”), which was founded in 1912 and went on to be the main party newspaper throughout and beyond the Soviet era. His ideas continued to evolve. For him, 1905 had emphasized the correctness of Marxist analysis that the working class would exercise “hegemony” over the political activities of the peasantry, who constituted some 90% of Russia’s population at the time. In the post-1905 period, Lenin’s analysis moved on to calling for a democratic dictatorship of the working class and the peasantry as a preliminary stage before socialism and, eventually, communism.

However, practical conditions were such that little room existed for political maneuvers and attention turned to a series of culture wars. Combating what he considered dangerous heresies in his own movement, Lenin wrote a philosophical treatise titled *Materialism and Empiriocriticism* in which he asserted the self-evident nature of the existence of objective reality outside

the perceptions of the individual. The argument was crude and polemical and contained little that has attracted the attention of serious philosophers either then or since.

Although horrified by the barbarism entailed, Lenin saw the outbreak of war in 1914 as a revolutionary opportunity. It was, he argued, to be turned from a war between nations into a class war that would result in the establishment of a republican United States of Europe. He joined the minority of European socialists, who had refused to support the war in their various countries, in efforts to bring about a “democratic peace.” He also continued to write and produced another important work, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*. In it he analyzed the current situation in 1915–16 when he wrote and published it. In particular, he developed his view that the war was an imperialist war for profits waged between competing capitalist blocs. By forming powerful cartels and monopolies in key areas of the economy and by developing a powerful banking system, capital had become all-powerful in the main warring powers. It had permeated, even hijacked, the state, which had become its servant. It had also created “superprofits,” part of which was used to “bribe” some of the workers of the advanced countries into supporting capitalism. This implied that workers who were victims of imperialism would have to lead the resistance. Lenin had opened up the way to the wave of non-proletarian Marxist revolutions not only in Russia itself but also eventually in China, Southeast Asia, and to a lesser extent, Cuba. It helped Marxism become a preeminently anti-imperialist theory.

From Theory to Practice

When Lenin received the news of the collapse of tsarism in February 1917, his first thought was to return to Petrograd from Zurich. On arrival at the Finland Station in Petrograd on April 3, Lenin immediately read out ten theses that were to guide his action in 1917. In little more than two pages, these so-called April Theses encapsulated Leninism. Among the most important were the assertions that Russia was passing from the stage of bourgeois revolution to that of proletarian revolution; that gradual and patient work was needed to assist this process; that the police, army, and bureaucracy should be abolished; that banks should be amalgamated and

nationalized; that it was not the task of the party to “*immediately*” “*introduce*” socialism (Lenin’s emphases) but only political supervision of production and distribution; and most controversial of all, that there should be no support for the interim, liberal-oriented Provisional Government. In this crucial document, many aspects of Lenin’s thought come to the fore, notably his theory of stages adapted from Marx; his refusal for the time being to call for an immediate transition to socialism in favor of an intermediate stage of an increasingly politically regulated capitalism; and for the moment, no indication as to whether the new “stage” would last months, years, or decades. His recipe for government via soviets rather than a parliament was expanded in his last, great work written later in 1917 titled *State and Revolution*, in which the fundamental argument was that the operations of a modern capitalist economy had become so managerial that it could be controlled by decapitating it—that is, by taking over the banks. From this substantial bridgehead, the capitalist economy could be transformed into a socialist one, although there are no details on exactly how it might be done. By and large, Lenin assumed the natural wisdom of the working class, expressed through soviets, would instinctively work out the details. In particular, their “consciousness” would pull them through, especially since the main role of the party was to develop and raise class consciousness. The second major theme of *State and Revolution* was the replacement of a bourgeois, constitutional state structure and representative democracy with the more direct and participatory form of soviet democracy.

State and Revolution remained unfinished because Lenin was called away from yet another period of hiding to promote the October Revolution and establish himself in power. How did this dramatic transition come about? As late as July 1917, when a premature attempt by revolutionary military units in Petrograd to seize power was repulsed by the Provisional Government, the Bolsheviks were still a relatively small and marginal entity. Ironically, the fact that the Provisional Government blamed the Bolsheviks for the failed July Days helped single them out as the group most feared by the government. Unsubstantiated accusations that Lenin was a German agent did temporarily tarnish the party, but their impact soon wore off. Two further factors were decisive in propelling the Bolsheviks into power. First, by refusing to support the Provisional Government, they were the largest party of the left to remain outside its framework. As the

popularity of the government declined, so the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks were pulled down with it. Minorities split off and began to move closer to the Bolsheviks. The second factor was the attempted military takeover of the Provisional Government in late August and September by the commander-in-chief of the army, General Kornilov. The abject failure of Kornilov's enterprise galvanized the masses into defense of their interests over land, factories, and civilian and military soviets bringing a massive boost in support to the Bolsheviks and their new allies, which Lenin was determined to exploit by driving for a seizure of power that succeeded on October 25, 1917. From that day until his death, Lenin was the informal head of the Soviet state as well as the ruling party. It should be noted, however, that the party had come to power through contingent factors and clever short-term actions *not*, as Lenin himself believed, through a steady and widespread accumulation of class consciousness among workers. This anomaly left a major imprint on communist practice as successors attempted to implement a "Bolshevik" model that had not been applicable to the October Revolution itself.

Lenin's main focus in these years was to lay the foundations of the world's first socialist society. The actual historical conditions of the time were, to say the least, inauspicious. At the moment of takeover, Russia was embroiled in an already protracted and costly war that, given the new turmoil after the revolution, threatened Russia with invasion. In addition, a civil war against the old order developed as did a crucial internal struggle by which the Bolsheviks consolidated their initially tenuous hold on power. By 1921, they had broken their opponents but at a tremendous cost. Russia's industrial economy had collapsed, and the country's infrastructure was ruined. Nonetheless, Lenin's focus was on socialist transition.

In effect, early Soviet Russia underwent three attempted forms of transition to socialism. The first, already outlined in the *April Theses* and *State and Revolution*, was that of a supervised coercion of the capitalist economy into a socialist one. This naïve notion collapsed like a house of cards in the first six months of Bolshevik rule. None of the key actors played their expected role. Workers and peasants put survival ahead of transition, and the capitalists and state bureaucrats fought tooth and nail against the new authorities. Lenin was forced into a rethink that took place in March and

April 1918 and found expression in his major article *The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*. In place of loose supervision and local spontaneity, Lenin put the emphasis on “iron discipline” and “dictatorship” at the factory level as a necessary prerequisite for recovery. This was backed up by a new emphasis on political coercion to the point of terror, which became even more intense in August 1918, partly in response to Lenin being shot and seriously injured. Crucial to this second transition was the notion that only when economic production was in full swing could the emergence of socialism be contemplated. This meant that increasing production was the first and main task of the Soviet government. In many respects, this remained true of successive governments throughout the Soviet era, and in a sense, productionism was the highest stage of Bolshevism. However, after only three years, Lenin was forced by peasant resistance to rethink this position. Faced with grain shortages from 1918 because the peasants were not marketing their produce, since there were no industrial products or services to buy with the proceeds, the government resorted to forced requisition. Although the peasants were partially prepared to accept this during the war and civil war, its continuation beyond victory in the civil war (in essence achieved by the end of 1919) led to serious revolts against Soviet power in western Siberia and Tambov in 1920 and the naval base at Kronstadt in early 1921. A further model had to be thought up. This took the form of the New Economic Policy (NEP) based on a mixed economy in which the state controlled “the commanding heights” of banking, finance, heavy industry, transport, and foreign trade, but limited markets were permitted for agricultural products, some services, and small-scale collective, workshop-style, or artisanal production. Lenin was satisfied with this compromise and expressed high hopes in his last writings such as *On Co-operation* and *Our Revolution* that they had stumbled on the perfect transitional model.

He did not live long enough to see NEP beginning to unravel in the mid-1920s. He was increasingly ill after May 1922 when he had the first of a series of strokes that increasingly incapacitated him. Speculation abounds that had he not been ill he would have curtailed the career of Stalin, but be that as it may, it was Stalin who eventually came to power after him, wound up NEP, and returned to a model that much more resembled the iron proletarian discipline and terror of the 1918–20 model. Lenin spent his last

two years on the sidelines. He made a last poignant visit to his old office in the Kremlin in October 1923, a visit that almost foundered because the guard, who failed to recognize him, would not let him in because he did not have a valid pass. Three months later he died, on 21 January 1924. Against his wishes, his remains were embalmed and put on display in a mausoleum in Red Square where they still are at the time of writing.

From Lenin to Leninism

While Lenin was alive, there was no Leninism. The Party Program (1919) and the documents of the Communist International, notably, its 21 conditions for admission, were early manifestations of an attempt to generalize the experience of Russia into a widely applicable theory of revolution in its two key phases—overthrow of the existing order and construction of a new system—linked by the crucial moment of “transition.” Gradually, several key features began to crystallize out of the discussions.

First of all, of course, Lenin was a Marxist and subscribed to Marx’s theory of class struggle, with exploitation as its central nexus, forming the basis of human history. Under capitalism, the struggle between worker and bourgeois employer would, of itself, lead the workers to revolution. However, Lenin’s ideas took on a somewhat different shape. The firm foundation of a distinctive Leninism is the notion of, in Stalin’s words, “a party of a new type.” This was usually referred to as a vanguard party having three identifying features. First, it would have what was later described as a “leading role,” in the revolution first and in post-revolutionary society afterward. Second, it would be organized on the principle of “democratic centralism,” which meant in theory that party members were free to hold different opinions but that once a decision had been reached, all party members had a duty to implement the decision and cease all opposition to it. In practice, decision making was concentrated at the top of the party. Third, the party was made up of militants with “advanced class-consciousness” and a primary duty of the party was to “raise consciousness” by means of agitation and propaganda. In addition, a party morality evolved based on the conviction that revolutionary ends

justified a wide range of means, some of which were cruel, harsh, and dictatorial.

A second widely influential aspect of Leninism is the fact that, through the notion of imperialism, revolution became international and could be started (although not finished) at a point outside the leading capitalist nations. This altered the orthodox Marxist assumption that revolution would break out first in the most economically advanced countries. Lenin's notion opened up a whole new vista for Marxism as the fighting doctrine of radical movements among the worldwide victims of imperialism.

Popularization of the term *Leninism* and the heaviest imprint on its initial formulation came from Stalin, who was among the first to use the term and define its contents in a series of lectures published in 1924 titled *Problems of Leninism*. Mainstream definitions of Leninism, which became known as Marxism-Leninism and was enshrined as the official ideology of the Soviet system, were produced through increasingly Stalin-controlled bodies such as the party and Comintern. Not surprisingly, in this dominant form, it became almost as much "Stalinism" as "Leninism." Dissident communists who opposed Stalin, notably Trotsky and Bukharin, tended to turn to the alternative models of a more "democratic" and antibureaucratic Lenin of the *April Theses* and *State and Revolution* in the case of Trotsky and his followers, or the provisions of the New Economic Policy for Bukharin. In essence, then, there were, from early on, competing interpretations of Leninism. They shared a number of key elements, especially when it came to the role and nature of the party and the question of consciousness but differed over, for example, exactly how "productionist" goals should be achieved. Trotsky favored regimentation, central planning, and discipline imposed from above, not unlike Stalin himself on this question, while Bukharin defended a model more dependent on a regulated market than on direct coercion.

Much of Soviet and postrevolutionary politics in other self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninist states have revolved around this key issue. In China, a "voluntaristic" transition modeled on Stalin's policies of 1928–32 ran through the Maoist period from the inauguration of agricultural communes, through the Great Leap Forward, to its grotesque finale in the Great

Proletarian Cultural Revolution of 1966–76. In Cuba, Che Guevara and other supporters of “moral” incentives based on education, propaganda, and political pressure were in conflict with the Castro brothers, who advocated “material” incentives such as bonuses and promotions. The most tragic misapplication of a derivative of the Leninist models came in Kampuchea, where the ideologically driven attempt to achieve national economic independence by cutting ties with the outside world led to the forced evacuation of the overpopulated capital Phnom Penh, resulting in tens, maybe hundreds, of thousands of deaths. Thus, although Leninism has been associated with a centralized, disciplined party tolerating no dissent, the further application of its principles of dictatorship of the proletariat, productionism, and other aspects of socialist transition have led to wide disparities in Leninist movements.

Christopher Read

See also [Communism](#), [Varieties of](#); [Chinese Cultural Revolution](#); [Democratic Centralism](#); [Dictatorship of the Proletariat](#); [Mao Zedong](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Planning](#); [Power](#); [Progress](#); [Revolution](#); [Russian Political Thought](#); [Russian Revolution](#), [Political Thought of the](#); [Stalin and Stalinism](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Terrorism](#); [Totalitarianism](#); [Trotsky, Leon](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [Utopianism](#)

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Liberalism

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Liberalism

Liberalism is most associated with government by consent, human rights, constitutionalism, the separation of powers, freedom of speech and belief, and a tendency to favor incremental change or reform. In one form or another it is both the dominant ideology of Western nations and the basic creed of such global institutions as the United Nations.

The Emergence of Liberalism

Although elements of liberalism appear as early as in Aristotle's *Politics*, modern liberalism emerged gradually from political demands made in the medieval period, either against the monarch or against the government more generally. Thus, the Magna Carta (1215), although an agreement merely between the English king and his barons, implied constraints on the power of the king. Similarly, the medieval coronation oath often indicated reciprocal obligations between the monarch and the people. The oath was often a form of governmental contract in that the king's authority was not accepted unless he bound himself to provide just and good government. This use of contract as the basis for possible popular resistance to a tyrannical government is most frequently associated with John Locke in the seventeenth century but was already apparent in the writings of Manegold of Lautenbach in the eleventh century.

Early liberalism is associated with the notion of social contract, popular in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and most famously used in the political theories of Thomas Hobbes, Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Its individualist postulate is that humans existed before society, and so the individual comes first logically and sometimes, as with Locke, historically. Humans were presumed to have created their own society on the basis of rational consent. The contract is a voluntary agreement of those who will be bound by the rules of the system they establish. In this formula, we see the emergence of later notions of individual freedom and the self-determination of peoples.

Locke argued for individual rights, the sanctity of property, and government by consent and, like Hobbes, attacked the idea of the divine right of kings. He followed John Milton in the view that society is based on contract but government rests only on trust. In this way, the government was a servant rather than an equal of the people, who had a right of resistance should the trust be broken. In such writings, we clearly find the early seeds of liberalism, even though they were sown by people who had no intention of producing what eventually resulted. Thus, for Locke, explicit consent was assumed to be granted only by those who first set up the contract. For all later generations, tacit consent was assumed by their staying on the territory, using its currency, and reaping its benefits. So consent need not imply democracy even if it seems to have democratic implications. It all depends on precisely whose consent is presumed or requested and how it operates. Similarly, Locke wrote a famous essay on religious toleration, an important step forward, but granted only to Protestant churches and sects and not to Catholics or atheists.

Enlightenment and Revolution

The rise of modern liberal thought is inextricably linked to the eighteenth-century Enlightenment and its inspiring of progressive change. Although sometimes traced back as far as the 1670s, it has been associated most centrally with the famous French *Encyclopaedia* edited by Denis Diderot and Jean D'Alembert between 1751 and 1765. Basic to the whole movement was the attempted application of rationality to traditional norms and institutions, with the implication that they might be changed for the

better. In the 1780s, Immanuel Kant argued that only those institutions could be respected that had withstood free and open examination, but rational enquiry, to be effective, needed an environment of tolerance and permission to develop one's ideas wherever reason might lead. This notion is exactly what established states and religions had traditionally opposed. Little wonder, then, that both Voltaire and Diderot, like Locke before them, wrote treatises on toleration. Most Enlightenment thinkers were liberal in respect of openness and free thought but much less so in terms of political participation. There was, however, a more radical tendency, including Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Thomas Jefferson, and Thomas Paine, who valued citizenship and political participation.

As the area of European culture where new political systems were being established, it was in North America that emergent liberal theory could most easily be put into practice. The background to European emigration was the pursuit of a religious freedom that had not been available in the countries of origin. On fleeing to North America, persecuted religious minorities became not merely religious communities but also political ones; they became their own state in the same manner as they were already their own church, that is, by voluntary agreement. So the foundational documents of the United States of America—the Declaration of Independence of 1776 and the Constitution that became operational in 1789—are monuments to eighteenth-century liberalism. The Declaration is based on the notions of natural rights, political representation, and the right to resist tyranny. The act of producing a written constitution is a product of the rationalism of the era. The liberalism in the content is most marked in the attempt at federalist decentralization, the separation of powers, and the separation of church and state. Unlike any European regime of the period, the U.S. government had no hereditary or ecclesiastical offices. In 1791, a Bill of Rights was added to the Constitution. Its first article stated that:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assembly, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

The Constitution originally said nothing on voting rights, so the political system became more fully liberal, in terms of democracy, when black and female voting rights were won, in 1870 and 1920, respectively. The sense of principles acknowledged but not yet fully applied is powerfully apparent in the most famous political speech of the twentieth century, when Martin Luther King, Jr., in “I Have a Dream” (1963), called on the government to fulfill the true meaning of the country’s creed.

A statement of human rights was also drawn up in France in the month after the revolution of July 1789. Along with the inspirational trinity of “liberty, equality, fraternity,” it proclaimed the rights to property, security, and freedom of opinion. An axiom of the revolution that is basic to liberalism is the career open to talent. Inspired by the life of Abraham Lincoln, the American version of this vision became “From log cabin to White House.” Liberalism, then, is an ideology of equal opportunities. It requires that the leading positions in any society should be attainable by merit alone, and not, as in the aristocratic principle, defined by birth as the fundamental qualification for power and authority. The French revolutionaries saw their basic enemy as being the aristocracy, with whom they dealt in a most illiberal manner. They also imprisoned Thomas Paine, British-born but actively engaged in both the American and French revolutions. His *Rights of Man* (1791–92) became one of the foundational liberal texts of the period, which he saw as one of both reason and revolution. Paine believed that the new American republic would provide a model that would be rapidly copied elsewhere. He was greatly impressed with the Americans having a written constitution. Without one, he argued, a government has full legislative freedom, for good or ill, during its period of office. Where there is a constitution, legislative powers are curtailed, the people maintain their basic rights, and so tyranny becomes impossible. Paine thought that America had done everything right and that England had done everything wrong. The British class system perpetuated the division created long ago by the Norman conquest of 1066, while the British state system impoverished society, for it gathered around the throne a band of parasites living off public money. Paine mocked the principle of inheritance by which the monarchy and aristocracy operated, asking whether we would also like to have hereditary mathematicians or poet-laureates. If the people reclaimed their basic rights, he believed, it would be possible to have both cheaper

government and rudimentary welfare provisions for the poorest. In this way, he was a forerunner of the “new liberalism” of a century later.

The Nineteenth-Century Consolidation

The French revolutionaries granted citizenship to a number of foreign radicals. One such was Paine, a supporter of their revolution; another was Jeremy Bentham, who was not. It might now seem strange that Bentham was a liberal, yet he derided the notion of natural rights. He believed, however, that he had found a better alternative in the principle of utility. He took it as a fundamental characteristic of human nature that people pursue happiness and avoid pain. These preferences were to be subjected to a kind of utilitarian accountancy to ascertain whether any proposed action was likely to increase or decrease the greatest happiness of the greatest number. In early nineteenth-century Britain, the fortuitous advantage of this approach was that it provided a criterion for reform that avoided a human rights doctrine then too closely identified with the French Revolution. So Bentham became a great influence on numerous British reformers as well as on Prime Minister Sir Robert Peel. Bentham was also an indefatigable campaigner for constitutional reform, sending offers to draft or redraft constitutions to, among others, the Tsar of Russia and the President of the United States. Even more ambitiously, he made a “Codification Proposal . . . to All Nations Professing Liberal Opinions.” Bentham’s advice was sought from many countries, especially in South America, when, after independence from Spain, new constitutions were being drafted in Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, and Mexico. In Argentina in the 1820s, President Rivadavia became a disciple of Bentham. A later prominent Argentine liberal was Domingo Sarmiento, who admired the American constitution, opposed the idea of a state religion, and advocated toleration of all opinions. In *Civilization and Barbarism* (1845), he campaigned for European liberal civilization and against the Argentine gaucho warlords.

James Mill was a friend, neighbor, and popularizer of Jeremy Bentham and brought up his more famous son, John Stuart Mill, to be the carrier of utilitarianism for the next generation. This plan presumed the son’s compliance with the creed, but acquaintance with Samuel Taylor Coleridge,

Wilhelm Humboldt, and other thinkers and poets of the Romantic movement led Mill to adopt a broader outlook. He also had to meet the claims of critics that utilitarianism had too narrow a view of human nature as selfish and competitive. Mill's answer, in *Utilitarianism* (1861), was that individuals should be strictly impartial between their individual desires and the needs of others. In terms of Bentham's calculus of happiness, Mill argued that the tabulation of quantity was insufficient and that the quality of happiness should also be taken into account.

Mill's *On Liberty* (1859) is now regarded as the most significant text of classical liberal political theory. Mill argued that the conditions of modernity created dangers to liberty that were insufficiently recognized. People did not need telling that kings could be tyrannical and churches intolerant. Less recognized was the new danger posed by the intolerance of mass society, a lesson Mill had learnt from Alexis de Tocqueville as well as from a hostile public opinion, disapproving of his "scandalous" relationship with then-married Harriet Taylor, whom he later wed after John Taylor's death. This threat to individuality not only stunted human nature, but it also threatened societal development and so civilization itself. Mill instanced the case of China, which had previously been in the forefront of development but became a global backwater once free thought was curtailed and conformity demanded. To defend individuality, Mill asserted the basic principle that only the threat of harming the rights of others could justify the state's interfering with anyone's liberty of action. This position presumed that one could differentiate between self-regarding and other-regarding actions, a distinction generally viewed as less clear-cut than Mill hoped. Despite the qualms of critics, he succeeded in establishing freedom of speech as a critical defense of individuality. In addition, his "harm-to-others" limitation on liberty, especially liberty of action, has also won widespread support, among both conservatives and liberals.

The issue of liberty was also central to Mill's position in *The Subjection of Women* (1869), where he argued that liberty was unjustly denied to half the species. Women's inferior legal status was a notorious surviving instance of the law of the strongest, an outdated practice that, he believed, should be rejected. Mill regarded the power of the husband as similar to that of the aristocrat in enjoying benefits based on birth rather than on merit. In each

case, such a basis of power corrupts the beneficiary and degrades the victims.

The classical version of economic liberalism is that it gives overwhelming priority to the free market. The traditional liberal suspicion of the state here results in the demand that it be confined to the minimal functions of keeping law and order, external defense, and a stable currency. The economy is presumed to work best when it is self-regulating, stabilized by a serendipitously guiding “invisible hand,” as Adam Smith put it in *The Wealth of Nations* (1776). Smith, Thomas Malthus, David Ricardo, and James Mill are regarded as the most influential theorists of classical economic liberalism. John Stuart Mill was brought up to be a proponent of this doctrine, which he tried to follow, but in his *Principles of Political Economy* (1848), he found, rather against his inclinations, that modifications of the doctrine were increasingly necessary, for in addition to law and order and a stable currency, it was also necessary for the state to provide standard weights and measures, roads, and canals. The state should also enforce education, ensure that children were safeguarded, and provide for the care of the mentally ill. Economically, it might also be necessary to protect infant industries.

In its economic aspect, classical liberalism is often regarded as the ideology of the property-owning classes, of those that could fend for themselves, the emerging middle class of entrepreneurs and businessmen for whom state regulations imposed a curb on their economic activity. This view, however, has varied both by country and over time. In the nineteenth century, the notion of global free trade obviously best suited Great Britain, the country that had industrialized first and so dominated world trade. By contrast, liberal industrialists in other countries had a greater interest in protectionism. In his *National System of Political Economy* (1841), the German liberal Friedrich List argued that economically backward countries needed state support and protection until they were sufficiently developed to compete in the world market. Even in Britain, free-market ideas came under greater challenge with the rise of industry elsewhere, particularly in the United States and Germany, by the end of the nineteenth century. Global laissez-faire is the natural economic ideology of the dominant economic power. It suited Britain when she was and less so when she was not.

Liberalism and the Working Class

Around the middle of the nineteenth century, parts or all of the male working class already had the vote in the United States (where each state determined its own franchise), France (1848), Prussia (1849), and from 1867, Great Britain. Liberals supported the idea of representative government but also favored rationality and the security of property, which working-class voting might endanger. So liberals' old concern with the class above was gradually subordinated to unease with the class below. Liberalism's first reaction to the political threat from below was to resist it. The belief in government by consent was taken to mean the consent of the rational, the educated, the property owners, not the consent of all. In his *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861), John Stuart Mill recommended educational qualifications for voting and proportional representation as a way of protecting minorities.

A more significant reaction, in terms of liberal theory, was to acknowledge the grievances of the poor in industrial societies—that capitalism had made them free but at the same time had reduced their life chances. Critics of capitalism, from socialists such as Karl Marx to Southern aristocrats such as George Fitzhugh, increasingly charged that freedom, choice, and well-being were diminished for those in poverty. Paradoxically, the unregulated free market was *reducing* the freedom and life opportunities of the working class. As the disenfranchised majority of poor white males, followed by men of color, and then women won the right to vote, conservatives could no longer rely on the state to support the socioeconomic status quo that had historically privileged white male property owners. Having previously resisted a strong government, liberals began to invite the state back in as the obvious institutional base for ameliorating the lot of the disadvantaged.

Influential theorists of this “New Liberalism” include the Englishmen Thomas Hill Green, who brought to liberalism a stronger concern with community; John A. Hobson, who urged the modification of laissez-faire economics; and Leonard Trelawny Hobhouse, who argued that inequality diminished freedom. In the United States, the new liberalism found persuasive advocates of an activist state in the vigorous President Theodore Roosevelt's top idea man, Herbert Croly, and in Roosevelt's distant cousin

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who oversaw the New Deal in response to the Great Depression, in large part inspired by the trust-busting, populist model of his cousin and predecessor. What these new liberal British and American thinkers and practitioners had in common was their commitment to using the state to improve the opportunities of the disadvantaged and to actively guide the society toward the common good, rather than leaving these outcomes to the vagaries of an untrammelled free market.

This type of liberalism seemed within fingertip reach of socialism and so, unsurprisingly, encountered some resistance, most notably in Englishman Herbert Spencer's *The Man versus The State* (1884) and American William Graham Sumner's *What Social Classes Owe to Each Other* (1884). Both Spencer and Sumner believed that liberals had not been true to their core beliefs and had, in Britain and the United States, promoted a massive increase in governmental control. They disliked the new mentality whereby the state was expected to be the savior of everyone's problems. As a result, the successful were having to featherbed the unsuccessful and idle. The presumed natural law of social development, the survival of the fittest, was thereby undermined, to the great detriment of social progress. Spencer and Sumner represent a stark form of the antiwelfare strand of liberalism. Where equal opportunities are assumed to exist, some liberals, including Locke and J. S. Mill, assumed that the poor were lazy and irresponsible and therefore undeserving of help. In the United States, although Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal permanently enlarged the role of the U.S. government, new forms of Social Darwinism, influenced by both Spencer and Sumner, have continued to pose serious problems for the new liberalism of the Democratic Party and for Democratic presidents such as Bill Clinton and Barack Obama.

Liberalism Against Authoritarianism

The belief in equal human rights logically should have produced full liberal endorsement for female enfranchisement. That development, however, had to contend with the traditional assumption of separate spheres, that public life was the preserve of men and home life that of women. That pattern was disturbed by World War I when women filled the employment gaps left by

enlisted men. Women's claims to full citizenship were thus considerably enhanced, and by 1920, they had won voting rights in all of North America and most of Europe. Defeated Germany had replaced the Kaiser's Empire with what was probably the most liberal constitution in the world. The League of Nations had been set up to arbitrate disputes between countries, and thus, liberal ascendancy seemed to have been achieved. It was a false dawn, however, for the 1929 Wall Street collapse led to economic depression in many Western countries and contributed to the rise of Nazism in Germany, which, with fascism in Italy and communism in the Soviet Union, represented a powerful and threatening authoritarian alternative to liberalism.

After World War II, widespread decolonization furthered the liberal principle of self-determination of peoples, while the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed liberal beliefs as those by which all countries, whatever their practices, should attempt to justify themselves. Liberalism now came to be seen less as a particular ideology than as undogmatic common sense, seeking to preserve what is valuable and reform what is deficient. For a time, a theory of the end of ideology, advanced by thinkers such as Daniel Bell, won considerable intellectual support. Ironically, triumphant liberalism was not reflected in the revival of explicitly liberal political parties, whose partisan appeal was much reduced by the co-optation of their ideas across the whole democratic spectrum. Yet the various components of the liberal legacy were not equally strongly integrated in the West. The parts given most prominence related to government by consent and freedoms of speech and conscience. Economic free-market liberalism had articulate campaigning popularizers, such as Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman but, until the late 1970s, was widely dismissed as anachronistic. Politicians holding such classically liberal views now tended to be regarded, and indeed saw themselves, as conservatives, most prominently Barry Goldwater and later Ronald Reagan in the United States, and Enoch Powell and Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom.

Hayek was born in Vienna but became a British citizen in 1938. His *The Road to Serfdom* was published in 1944. He feared that while fighting Nazism, the British were actually succumbing to the mentality that had produced it, for they were increasingly scornful of nineteenth-century

liberalism. He noted that individualism had unfairly become associated with selfishness. Meanwhile the predominant strand of the British Labour Party seemed unaware of the extent to which central planning tends to produce creeping authoritarian rule (“totalitarianism” to some). For Hayek, to control people’s lives, even in the name of some utopia, is to destroy their freedom. He portrayed economic planning as an intrusion by the state into the most important areas of decision-taking. In a planned society, individuals are the passive recipients of policy rather than the active creators of their own situation. Planning leads to an over-dominant state because it centralizes power, whereas the competitive society decentralizes it. The market system, then, is taken to guarantee diversity and choice and, therefore, liberty. It is the only method by which individuals’ activities can be coordinated, as by Smith’s “invisible hand,” without organizational intervention.

As with Hayek, Isaiah Berlin’s writings are also marked by a hostile reaction to German Nazism and Soviet Communism. Berlin was born in Riga, Russia, in 1909; was in Petrograd during both 1917 revolutions; and moved to England in 1921. He argued against any utopian notion of an ideal society because ends collide and so choices have to be made between them. He formulated a much-discussed distinction between negative and positive liberty. Negative liberty is identified more with the absence of constraint, and positive liberty more with obedience to natural law and reason. They lead, Berlin thought, in radically different directions. The notion of negative liberty provides the basis for the liberalism of Jefferson, Burke, Paine, Constant, and Mill, while positive liberty leads from Rousseau to Hegel, Marx, in the direction of totalitarianism.

Recent Debate

John Rawls’s *A Theory of Justice* (1971) is arguably the most influential work of liberal philosophy of the twentieth century, attempting a bold new synthesis of liberty and equality. It contains a surprising reemergence of social-contract theory, not on the basis of a state of nature that actually existed but for the positing of a hypothetical situation to determine what would make a just society. Rawls hoped to get around the problem of individuals’ biases by providing a “veil of ignorance” (Rawls [1971]1978,

136–42) over individuals presumed to possess rationality and political and economic knowledge, but, crucially, not knowing their own place in society. The outcome is presented as a constitutional democracy that has usually been identified as a relatively egalitarian form of liberalism, even though Rawls allowed for justifiable inequalities and left open the choice between capitalist and socialist economies. Despite his popularity among liberal political theorists, Rawls faced a barrage of criticisms and, a generation later, conceded that his general theory of justice as fairness had failed: “The fact of a plurality of reasonable but incompatible doctrines—the fact of reasonable pluralism—shows that as used in *Theory*, the idea of a well-ordered society of justice as fairness is unrealistic” (1995, p. xvii). Rawls (1995) retreated to a procedural, rather than to a substantive, conception of liberalism, although he also attempted to shore up his original, substantive vision (1971) in later editions.

Another surprising reemergence was the theory of universal history in Francis Fukuyama’s *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992). The work has a strong affinity with the main presuppositions of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European social and political thought, for Fukuyama revived the idea that the course of history moves in a coherent, logical, and upward direction. He took as universal the process of history toward industry and liberal democracy. Furthermore, liberal democracy is taken to be more than just the currently dominant creed; it was additionally the end point of humanity’s ideological evolution. There could be no further hegemonic idea.

Fukuyama’s book was written just after the fall of Soviet and East European communism and so represents the high point of liberal triumphalism at having seen off its main competitors. That “triumph,” however, is not the end of the matter. Some feminists, for example, argue that liberal notions of the “individual” and the “citizen” are implicitly masculine rather than gender-neutral. Multiculturalists have discussed the awkward issue of whether liberal tolerance should extend to ethnic minorities with intolerant creeds. John Rawls has justified the imposition of human rights on so-called rogue states, thereby reminding us of nineteenth-century liberal imperialism. In *Post-Liberalism* (1993) and *Two Faces of Liberalism* (2000), John Gray rejected liberalism’s claim to universal authority, its

theory of progress, its notion of the atomized individual, and its assumption that all human beings are entitled to the same stock of rights. He sees liberalism as a Eurocentric creed that is ill-equipped to deal with the world as it now is. Clearly, then, the debate on liberalism is far from over.

Michael Levin

See also [Authority](#); [Autonomy](#); [Berlin, Isaiah](#); [Capitalism](#); [Constitutionalism](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Equality and Egalitarianism](#); [Feminism](#); [Freedom of Expression](#); [French Revolution](#); [Political Thought of the](#); [Hayek, Friedrich](#); [Humanitarian Intervention](#); [Ideology](#); [Individualism](#); [Law and Political Thought](#); [Liberalism](#); [Libertarianism](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Mill, John Stuart](#); [Neoliberalism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Paine, Thomas](#); [Pluralism](#); [Popper, Karl](#); [Progress](#); [Radicalism](#); [Rawls, John](#); [Representation](#); [Republicanism](#); [Revolution](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Rule of Law](#); [Separation of Powers](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Toleration](#); [Totalitarianism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [Utilitarianism](#)

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Liberation Theology

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Liberation Theology

Liberation theology, a movement linked with social change, arose at a time of political repression in Latin America and coincided with the ferment in the Roman Catholic Church after the Second Vatican Council and the encyclicals associated with it. In its distinctive method, it has many affinities with feminist theology, black theology, and various kinds of contextual theology.

The wider ecclesial context has also been important. The decisions taken by the Latin American bishops at their epoch-making meeting at Medellín, reaffirmed at Puebla with the explicit commitment to take a “preferential option for the poor,” have offered a foundation for those Christians committed to the betterment of the poor to see their task as an integral part of the church’s mission of evangelization. Liberation theology has emerged within the development of modern Catholic social teaching as its exponents have responded to the “reality,” which confronts millions: poverty, appalling living conditions, malnutrition, and inadequate health care. In the Roman Catholic Church, the power of diocesan bishops is such that attempts to get the grassroots movement off the ground without episcopal support have found the going tough indeed, even though the social conditions of large numbers of people may be every bit as bad as in other dioceses where the theology has taken root. But in those dioceses where the diocesan bishop is supportive, that power can be used to push a diocese in a progressive direction.

The particular circumstances of the church in Brazil in the 1970s and 1980s offered a context for the development of liberation theology, which has been unique in Latin America. Brazilian Catholicism is characterized by a widespread acceptance of the basic ecclesial communities (CEBs) and their central role in being the church in contemporary Brazil. The power of the Brazilian Bishops' Conference nationally and in the context of Latin America and the development of liberation theology in the face of Vatican criticism cannot be underestimated. In the Archdiocese of São Paulo, for example, the advocacy of the Cardinal Archbishop, Paulo Evaristo Arns (1921–), was crucial both locally and nationally in supporting pastoral programs, whose tenor was liberationist. Thereby an agenda was set for an innovative theological and political enterprise, which placed the struggles of millions for a better life at the center of pastoral ministry. In this, it was totally in line with the manifesto-like statement of *Gaudium et Spes*, a key document of the Second Vatican Council: “[T]he joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the [people] of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ” (Walsh and Davies 1991, 77).

Liberation theology was part of a more widespread popular movement in different countries, for example, *O Movimento de Sem Terra* in Brazil (Lehmann 1996). In Nicaragua, its leading exponents were key members of the Sandinista revolution, which swept the Somoza dictatorship from power in 1980 (Berryman 1984; Bradstock 1987). In that country, as elsewhere, relationships with the Roman Catholic Church remained tense, particularly when three priests became part of the government. One of them, Ernesto Cardenal, was part of a peasant community on the island of Solentiname, and the transcripts of the Bible study (*The Gospel in Solentiname*) give a flavor of liberation theology at work. It represents the more important dimension of liberation theology, the work of priests, members of religious orders, men and women, with campesinos and immigrants into the burgeoning shanty towns on the periphery of big cities in most Latin America countries.

More familiar to the Northern academy are the books written by Gustavo Gutiérrez, Juan Luis Segundo, and Leonardo and Clodovis Boff, in which the traditional language of theology was used as part of an ongoing

dialogue with mainstream Roman Catholic theology, political and otherwise, throughout the world. In this, the indebtedness to “Marxism” is entirely pragmatic and assists in the challenge to institutions, like the Roman Catholic Church, to opt for the economically poor and marginalized and at the same time to encourage personal and political empowerment by education, which includes a critical understanding of the existing social situation, as well as facilitation efforts to organize for ongoing political change.

Key to this movement from its inception has been the Peruvian theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez. Unlike Camilo Torres (1929–66), who died in an armed struggle with the Colombian army, Gutiérrez followed a different path. Torres has strangely become a symbol of liberation theology, but his theology and practice was as different from that of Gutiérrez as could be imagined; it was much less sophisticated, and the commitment to armed struggle is one that is untypical of liberation theology. It is true that the progressive wing of the churches in Nicaragua, Protestant and Catholic, supported the Sandinista revolution, but resorting to the kind of violent revolutionary practice that characterized Torres’s life and death is not typical. More common are the grassroots communities and the organization of a pastoral practice that includes consciousness-raising and the facilitating role of engagement with the Bible in light of the experience of injustice. The emphasis on praxis may have a Marxist ring to it, but it has deep roots within the Christian tradition going back to the Jesus movement itself.

Gutiérrez’s work has moved over the years from being more explicitly theological, rooted in the rhetoric of the Second Vatican Council in *A Theology of Liberation*, to his more recent work, which has focused on the antecedents of liberation theology in the “option for the poor” taken by Gutiérrez’s Dominican predecessor Bartolomé de Las Casas, who took up the cause of the indigenous people at the beginning of the conquest. As Las Casas prepared a homily on Ecclesiasticus 34:21–27, the words “Like one who kills before his father’s eyes is a person who offers a sacrifice from the property of the poor” crystallized a sense of the injustice of the economic system of which he was a part that exploited indigenous peoples. The rest of his life was devoted to obtaining rights for indigenous peoples from the Spanish crown. Gutiérrez and many other liberation theologians find the

inspiration for their writing in their work with the poor. They function very much as Gramscian organic intellectuals, in their relating to poor groups offering pastoral and theological advice. The practical faith of the nonprofessional reader can be resourced by a mode of reading of the scriptures, which does not need (even if it was often supported by) sympathetic intellectuals (West 1999).

The Bible has become a catalyst for the exploration of pressing contemporary issues relevant to the community and offers a language so that the voice of the voiceless may be heard. The Book of Exodus, and the story of Hebrew slaves in Egypt being liberated from their oppression and discovering new patterns of life, has been crucial for liberation theology from its inception. The use of the Exodus narrative is selective and does not include the climax of the story—the conquest of Canaan and the annihilation of indigenous peoples that is such a central part of the biblical story. Rather, it offers a constellation of symbols and themes, which are a stimulus for contemporary thought and action, which typifies liberation theology's approach to the Bible. The Exodus story concerns a recognition of oppression, the nature of the society, and its injustice and the enslavement not only economically but also intellectually and ideologically by the Egyptian monarchy. In this way, the biblical tradition becomes a catalyst for new thought and action related to the circumstances of everyday commitments. In the CEBs (*comunidades eclesiais de base*), there is an immediacy in the way in which the text is used because resonances are found with the experiences set out in the stories of biblical characters that seem remote from the world of most people in the more affluent Europe and North America. The Bible offers a means by which the present difficulties can be shown to be surmountable in the life of faith and community commitment. To enable the poor to read the Bible has involved programs of education of the contents of the biblical material, so that it can be a resource for thousands who are illiterate. In such programs, full recognition is taken of the value of the experience of life. It was inspired by the work of the distinguished educator Paulo Freire (1921–1997; Freire 1985). In his pedagogical writings, Freire emphasized the link between knowing and doing, experience and learning. Freire promoted a pedagogical process whereby human beings engage in active yet critical forms of education through which they embrace both their world, and each other, so that

education becomes the site of transformation in which the traditional pupil–teacher relationship is examined and the learning process is transformed into a student-centered education.

That said, the experience of poverty and oppression (often termed “life” or “reality”) is as important a text as the text of scripture itself. It represents another text to be studied alongside that contained between the covers of the Bible. The CEBs have been the dynamo for the emergence of liberation theology’s approach to the Bible. Among these grassroots groups, the Bible has become a tool for the exploration of pressing contemporary issues relevant to the community. Enabling the poor to read the Bible has involved a program of education of the contents of the biblical material. In such popular education programs, full recognition is taken of the value of the experience of life and so includes the wisdom of the artisan as well as of the scholar in interpreting the biblical text.

Theology as it has developed over the centuries can seem abstract from ordinary life as is evident in the way in which “theological” has come to be used to describe abstract, irrelevant discussion of a topic. In contrast, liberation theology has its origins in the reality of the premature and unjust death of many people, as Gustavo Gutiérrez has put it. However sophisticated the books and articles from the liberation theologians may seem to be, it is their experience and that of those with whom they work that is the motor that drives their theology. The struggle for survival and the church’s social teaching prompted priests and religious to think again about their vocation. In so doing, they have learned afresh from the poor as they have lived and worked with them.

The priority given to human experience echoes aspects of theology, particularly since the Enlightenment. This has been, in part, an exercise in opening a space for the experience of the interpreter. An important component of the critical enterprise was the assertion that contemporary experience must claim a place in the interpretative process. The difference is that it is being worked in shanty towns, land struggles, oppressed and humiliated groups, and areas of urban deprivation in the Northern hemisphere, where the rebuilding of shattered lives takes place. The theological agenda of European theology has been more concerned with

thinking about and explaining the truth of faith, whereas for liberation theologians, faith runs parallel to real life and is in dialectical relationship with it. Thereby the meaning of faith and doctrine is illuminated at the same time as the world's wretched condition is confronted and alleviated.

Commitment to the poor becomes the context of reflection, and so practical discipleship becomes the dynamic within which theological understanding takes place. Understanding of God and the world is a gift of grace and a perspective altered in a life of service to those who are the least of Christ's brothers and sisters. As stated in Matthew 25:27–40, which is a key text for all involved in liberation theology:

“Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?” And the king will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me” (New Revised Standard Version).

Liberation theology contrasts with much of the theology, even left-leaning political theology, that has emerged in the last two centuries, centered in university or seminary, in Europe and North America. There, normally, the priority is placed on intellectual discourse detached from “life.” The key thing is that one first of all does liberation theology rather than learns about it. Or, to put it another way, one can only learn about it by embarking on it. To ask the question, “[W]hat is liberation theology?” and think that one can answer without commitment and the understanding that emerges from doing it is to miss out on the central ingredient of liberation theology. This experience cannot adequately be communicated except by committing oneself and taking the first step along the road of solidarity and action. Therein lies the root of understanding.

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See also [Latin American Political Thought](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Libertarianism

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Libertarianism

Libertarianism is a philosophy that places individual liberty at the center of political thought. Although libertarians acknowledge the value of other goals, such as justice, peace, order, equality, and prosperity, they see them as given meaning by liberty. Libertarians take seriously the admonition of the English classical liberal historian Lord Acton that “[l]iberty is not a means to a higher political end. It is itself the highest political end.” Libertarians support free markets, free trade, repeal of victimless crime laws, and strict limits on governmental powers.

The term “libertarian” was popularized in the United States in the mid-twentieth century after “liberal” had come to be associated with what in Europe is known as “social democracy,” and a new term for liberal ideas was needed. The Austrian economist and later Harvard professor Joseph Schumpeter noted, “As a supreme, if unintended, compliment, the enemies of the system of private enterprise have thought it wise to appropriate its label” (Schumpeter 1954, 394). Thus, libertarianism is sometimes used in the United States to refer to the tradition of “classical liberalism” when “liberalism” would be used in other countries. “Libertarianism” is also sometimes used to distinguish the more radical or consistent proponents of liberal thought from other liberals who might accord more power to the state to intervene in otherwise voluntary relations.

A central tenet of libertarianism is the presumption of liberty, that is, the principle that interference with the freedom of others requires political

justification, whereas their free choices do not. In the absence of a legitimate reason to interfere with speech (e.g., a speech is found to be an incitement to violence), speech should not be censored or restricted. The restriction requires legal justification, but the act of speaking does not. Rights and freedoms are “unenumerated” (that is, not explicitly listed), whereas powers are “enumerated.” That principle was written into the U.S. Bill of Rights, through the Ninth and Tenth Amendments, but it has been largely neglected in jurisprudence. Modern “bills of rights” influenced by social democratic thinking take the opposite view, and enumerate rights against a background of broad and unenumerated state powers.

Libertarians insist that they are neither “left” nor “right” but consistent supporters of liberty and limited government. Issues on which libertarians have been outspoken in the United States and abroad, and where they have distinguished themselves from contemporary American liberals, conservatives, socialists, social democrats, and other political philosophies, include support for unrestricted freedom of trade; support for complete freedom of religion, speech, and expression; opposition to all victimless crime laws, including laws against narcotics and prostitution; protection of property against confiscation; opposition to compulsory “national service,” whether for military or nonmilitary purposes; support for strict constitutional limits on government power; strong skepticism about foreign military intervention; and support for reducing taxes and the burden of government, or even when possible eliminating taxes. There is a “Libertarian Party” in the United States, but libertarians can also be found in the Republican and Democratic parties, as well as among nonpartisan organizations.

Libertarians are not philosophically monolithic, but they encompass many different traditions of ethical and religious thought, all united in the conclusion that “live and let live” is a proper motto for social interaction. Libertarians associate individual liberty with constitutionally limited government, on the grounds that rule-based systems that restrict government authority protect individuals from arbitrary power. John Locke, a canonical figure among libertarian thinkers, stated that liberty, properly understood, did not mean just doing whatever one wants (for everyone would be subject to the arbitrary acts of others), but a “*Liberty* to dispose,

and order, as he lists, his Persons, Actions, Possessions, and his whole Property, within the Allowance of those Laws under which he is; and therein not to be subject to the arbitrary Will of another, but freely follow his own” (1689, Book II, Chapter VI, Second Treatise on Government).

Libertarians see rights, spontaneous social order, and rules of just conduct as mutually reinforcing elements of free societies. According to libertarian social and political thought, when equal rights are well defined and legally secured by institutions of limited government, free people create prospering social orders that are more complex and more orderly than rulers exercising coercive powers could have envisioned or created.

Tom G. Palmer

See also [American Political Thought](#); [Anarchism](#); [Autonomy](#); [Capitalism](#); [Freedom of Expression](#); [Ideology](#); [Individualism](#); [Isolationism](#); [Liberalism](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Neoconservatism](#); [Neoliberalism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Toleration](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [Utopianism](#)

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Liberty, Theories of

Much as liberalism, the ideology with which theories of liberty are most obviously associated, has been characterized as a diverse and pluralistic construct, the same can be said of the concept of liberty itself. The term *liberty* and its derivatives have a long lineage; consequently, anachronistic readings of key texts and events are not uncommon. One such instance is the use of *liberty* in the Magna Carta of 1215, resulting in the Charter being popularly depicted as the symbolic (or, more occasionally, as the properly tangible) birth of liberty. Yet the document has gained this status only in the modern era, as liberalism has become a major political force and constitutional arrangements have evolved that appear to owe something to the “tradition” of Magna Carta.

Although liberty and liberalism are obviously entwined, the former being a foundational element of the latter, they should not be seen as equivalent. As an ideology, liberalism is a considerably broader concept that draws as much on the principle of equality as it does on liberty. Theories of liberty are concerned specifically with the idea of agency and the constraints upon this (especially the notion of “structure”). For most intents and purposes, the term *freedom* may be seen as tantamount to *liberty*, although the former is also commonly used to signify particular rights as opposed to the overarching meaning of liberty. In addition to the readily apparent political ramifications that theories of liberty have, the issue extends into other fields too. This is especially apparent when the issue is formatted in terms of the

“structure versus agency” debate witnessed in sociological and historical study, among others.

Main Theories of Liberty

Three main theories of liberty dominate academic discourse. The first two, negative liberty and positive liberty, have become primarily associated with the work of Isaiah Berlin and are the most recognized and debated. The third theory is the republican one, sometimes rendered as civic republicanism or neorepublicanism. This has proven to be a contentious and potentially confusing area, especially given the possible overlap with civic humanism (a term often used synonymously, but avoided here).

Negative Liberty

Berlin’s *Two Concepts of Liberty* (1958, republished in 1969 in *Four Essays on Liberty*) has become the standard work on the distinction between negative and positive liberty. Simply put, the negative sense of liberty may be defined as an individual’s freedom to act without coercion or interference from any other party. This elementary definition does not, however, capture the full range of permutations and competing interpretations of the limits of freedom from coercion. For example, an individual may be unable to purchase food or fulfill another certain wish as a result of poverty, but this supposes a restriction on liberty only if one accepts certain socioeconomic theories that view poverty as the result of oppression by other actors. Oppression thus becomes the part that one believes to be played by other people in frustrating one’s wishes, and this frustration may be indirect or, indeed, unintended (although it may also be direct and intentional). For clarity, incapacity to attain any given goal does not presuppose any restraint on freedom; restraint of freedom arises only where there is constraint effected by other human beings.

Berlin bases his discussion of the negative sense of liberty in part on the ideas of Thomas Hobbes, the seventeenth-century English philosopher. Hobbes believed that liberty was freedom from coercion, but also that the area for this liberty could not be unlimited or “natural,” to use Hobbes’s

own terminology. Unlimited individual liberty would be essentially counter-productive, as it would lead to a chaotic state in which each person might interfere with others' freedom without constraint. Hobbes's own preferred solution to this issue was the establishment of a monarchical government to which all in society would surrender their sovereignty in exchange for social stability. Although such a monarchy would have almost unlimited power, Hobbes believed that by ensuring stability, the conditions would be laid for a preserved area of individual freedom unhindered by the interference of others.

Later thinkers in the liberal tradition have not generally embraced this Hobbesian proposal as they see the risk of arbitrary power as being too great; most have also tended to possess a more optimistic view of human nature than did Hobbes. Most liberal thinkers, such as John Locke, have instead posited an arrangement whereby individual liberty is ensured by a system of legal restrictions on the ability of one person to interfere in the affairs of another. This is often reinforced by a system of the separation of powers in the state so as to prevent "tyranny of the majority" feared by Alexis de Tocqueville. Of course, legal limitations in this regard will constrain liberty in some respects in order to ensure it in others—a recognition, to paraphrase an often-used analogy, that an individual's right to swing his or her fist ends where another person's face begins. The boundary of what should be regulated in order to provide a remaining area of uninhibited liberty is commonly taken to be the distinction between the public and private spheres, yet this is not a fixed boundary. As Berlin points out, this frontier is debated and difficult to pin down as all people are interdependent, and the choices of one person may well impact the life of another. Different conceptions of what area should be reserved to personal freedom have been based on ideas of natural rights and natural law, social contract, and the principle of utility. What is almost always agreed upon is that to have no reserved area of individual liberty at all would be a denaturing force and harmful to humanity. The central issue is finding the optimum balance since it is necessary to sacrifice some liberty to ensure that the remainder is retained, with complete sacrifice being obviously self-defeating.

Much of this presumes that liberty is the ultimate goal of humanity and that freedom is self-evidently desirable. Clearly, political freedom is not always the central desire of each individual; those starving or living in squalor would most probably seek the amelioration of their condition before considering what constrains their liberty. As Berlin notes, those in possession of liberty can sacrifice part or all of their freedom as a moral imperative in order to improve justice or equality, for example, but this does not equate to an increase in freedom for those suffering, as liberty, equality, and justice are distinct values. The compromise and balance between these principles are the distinguishing characteristics of differing versions of liberalism, rather than different theories of liberty.

Positive Liberty

Relative to negative liberty, the positive notion of freedom can be more difficult to define in a straightforward manner. The issue is further complicated by virtue of the fact that the two different senses of liberty do not in practice exist in isolation from one another. Rather, there is interaction between the two, and they can even be conflated. The simplest distinction between negative and positive liberty is often drawn as “freedom from” some given restriction versus “freedom to” act as one desires, but this is really too narrow a definition. Berlin (in *Two Concepts of Liberty*) phrases the divide between the two in terms of “the freedom which consists in being one’s own master [positive], and the freedom which consists in not being prevented from choosing as I do by other men [negative].” There is not merely a semantic difference between the two conceptions but rather a profound difference in intellectual outlook that deserves exploration.

Berlin points out that the thought of John Stuart Mill, one of the most noted British philosophers of the nineteenth century, invokes the conflation of the two senses of liberty. On the one hand, Mill clearly agreed with the idea that coercion was a negative force and that freedom from it was to be viewed as a positive. He further argued that individuals should be free to develop a certain kind of rational and inquisitive character that he saw as inherent to freedom and that, in turn, could be ensured only under conditions of liberty. Yet, as Berlin notes, it has been demonstrated that human genius can and has flourished under restrictive and intolerant

regimes and does not therefore seem to be so intimately tied to the possession of negative liberty. Therefore, Mill's assertion about the value of personal development and a self-conscious state of mind should instead be classed as a manifestation of positive liberty. Here we can begin to get at the root of what the positive notion of freedom really means. It is concerned with internal factors (that is, internal to the individual) that affect the way in which individuals or groups act. More specifically, it is the possession of self-constructed conscious purposes, the recognition that the individual is a subject and not an object, and that we are all rational, thinking beings that are capable of conceiving and working towards goals; in other words, "I am my own master."

The potential for confusing the two senses of liberty is, one can comfortably posit, at least partially explicable by the complexity of the positive sense alone. To this, though, must be added the fact that the latter sense also incorporates a duality in the definition of the self. There is the empirical self, defining itself by the sensory perception of the world around, and the inner—or "real"—self more concerned with the cultivation of higher pleasures. Scope is therefore provided for the two different concepts of liberty to relate to the two different selves, so to speak. The two can also be considered simultaneously, indicative of the pluralism of human values, and a tradeoff between could be contemplated.

To further complicate matters, the notion of the inner self is very often extended beyond the individual and applied to the concept of society as a whole. In such a way, society may be depicted as an organism, something more than the simple sum of its constituent individuals, and therefore capable of having its own desires and, indeed, needs. Conceiving of society as an organic whole has a number of consequences, not least of which is the idea that a "general will" can exist alongside a corresponding notion of "common good." This construct features prominently in the thought of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and was also picked up by the so-called "new liberal" theorists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The general will is distinct from a simple majoritarian or factional interest in that it is derived from reasoned and rational principles and is both generally applicable and necessarily guided by the enlightened principle of what is

best for all individuals. As such, laws derived from the general will could trespass on an individual's liberty in the negative sense.

It is at this point that Berlin and others, such as Karl Popper, become concerned by what they see as the calamitous potential of such ideas of positive liberty. If, it is argued, a general will is accepted, then individuals may be coerced into compliance with a goal and be “forced to be free,” as Rousseau put it. The goal itself may be rational and laudable, but if it is predicated on the argument that those who resist compliance have, in fact, already subconsciously recognized and accepted its benefit to themselves—and thus there is consequently no real coercion—the potential for manipulation, abuse, and the rise of totalitarian systems becomes considerable. Other thinkers, notably Charles Taylor and Michael Walzer, have defended aspects of positive liberty on communitarian grounds by arguing that other liberal theorists have failed to understand the importance of social institutions in the construction of the self and are therefore too prone to thinking in terms of atomistic individualism.

Overall, Berlin sees many of the problems of positive liberty as rooted in the idea that there are two distinct selves, compounded by the fact that one of these (the inner self) is transcended into a notion of organic society. If one presupposes an empirical self that must be controlled by the rational “real” self, then the door is opened to the masking of oppression by what Berlin calls the “retreat to the citadel,” where one limits or removes personal desires as a corollary of not being able to achieve them in any case (stemming from the restrictions on one's negative freedom). The promotion of negative liberty provides the best defense against totalitarian regimes and the abuse of power while also providing favorable circumstances for people to act as sovereign individuals (subject to certain limits) and ensuring value pluralism.

Republican Theory of Liberty

The so-called republican theory of liberty is a much-debated concept, but its impact on broader scholarship has been perceptible, especially in the realm of the history of ideas where Quentin Skinner is a leading practitioner. Indeed, it is from this field that the theory has developed, drawing as it does

upon the intellectual lineage of a diverse group of predominantly premodern theorists who themselves adopted and adapted ideas from ancient Rome and Greece in their own arguments on politics and virtue. Contemporary scholars, notably Philip Pettit, have taken up Skinner's discussion and considered its ramifications for present political discourse, especially in relation to arguments about liberty. Most specifically, proponents of republicanism have focused on engaging with the negative sense of liberty that has been dominant in the English-speaking world.

Republicans differ from the traditional theory of negative liberty in that they are concerned with the structures of political power themselves rather than the more specific outcomes of power structures. By way of example, an individual may be relatively free, in the negative sense, living under an authoritarian regime if the regime happens to interfere to only a marginal degree in his or her own sphere of activity (the regime may, of course, at any given time begin interfering more in that person's life, or it may interfere much more in some other individual's life). By contrast, a liberal democracy may be much more active in regulating its citizens' day-to-day activities, albeit within the bounds of the constitution established. Under a standard interpretation of negative liberty, we would conclude that the person living under the authoritarian regime, but experiencing very little interference, was freer than those citizens of the liberal democracy, despite the threat of arbitrary interference at any time in the former case. Republicans see this conclusion as counterintuitive and inadequate because it does not pay sufficient attention to the contingent fact that the authoritarian regime has simply chosen not to act in a more coercive manner, while the liberal democracy is constitutionally constrained in its ability to act arbitrarily. Adherents to the republican view consequently replace the concept of non-interference with that of non-domination.

Exactly what is meant by non-domination is, at times, a bit ambiguous, and any desirable definition would require some integration of the noninterference principle, creating overlap with policies aiming to ensure negative liberty. For example, laws in a republican framework that limit sectional domination or decrease dependence would be seen as increasing freedom in a similar, but admittedly distinct, way to the liberal necessity of surrendering some freedom in order to secure the remainder (we should also

recall Berlin's caution about conflating liberty with other values such as justice). In practical terms, non-domination most clearly means the freedom from arbitrary power, which is to be provided for by constitutional safeguards such as the separation of powers, much as we see in typical liberal arguments. Republicans see this as in need of reinforcement through more active democratic processes than are generally provided under standard liberal arrangements, including enhanced public debate of state and legislative decision making and the provision of a robust means by which citizens can challenge decisions made and hold representatives to account. Such a system would also rely on a strong sense of civic virtue whereby citizens are committed to the maintenance and operation of the system.

The republican theory of liberty is often disparaged as simply an effort to construct a framework for securing negative liberty rather than a genuinely distinct ideal. Such a dismissal appears slightly rash, however, and the shift of emphasis from noninterference to non-domination is no mere sleight of hand. In examining the structures of power in society, the republican thinkers preempted (and perhaps prompted) a renewed emphasis on institutional arrangements in mainstream liberalism. Much remains to be developed in republican theory, though, especially on the matter of what exactly constitutes non-domination and how freedom from interference can be incorporated into it or into republican liberty more broadly.

Key Theorists and Currents of Liberty: A Brief Chronology

A fairly large pantheon of thinkers who have directly engaged with the idea of liberty in an important and meaningful way can be delineated. It is not possible to list all such persons and to give them adequate treatment, so a selection of the most prominent figures is briefly explored below.

John Locke and Early Liberalism

Locke is often seen as the grandfather of the liberal tradition and, although in many ways Hobbesian thought has had more direct impact on

contemporary political theory, his popular image has been held in high esteem. Locke maintained that all men are born free and equal and enter into a social contract with the sovereign of the state in return for the benefits that this brings. Since this contract is one of consent, people have the power to hold their government to account if it fails to promote public good. The Lockean social contract model has proven durable and was picked up, with a Kantian twist, by John Rawls.

Two of Locke's contributions to the theory of liberty stand out as especially notable and worthy of mention. The first is his idea that people have natural rights—such as the rights to liberty, life, and property—granted to them by natural law that are, by consequence, inalienable and are therefore not subject to legitimate political interference. The second key contribution relates to Locke's theory of toleration, framed in reference to religion in his own work, which holds that those whose views are tolerant of others should themselves be tolerated (excepting, in Locke's own opinion, atheists and Roman Catholics). David Hume followed Locke's empirical approach but refined some of his predecessor's principles, such as property rights, away from a natural law basis and towards a pragmatic justification. Similarly, Adam Smith contributed greatly to the development of the liberal approach to political economy through his connection of the theory of liberty to commercial relations.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the Socialist Challenge to Liberty

It is sometimes debated as to whether Rousseau really belongs in the liberal tradition at all, but it is clear that his thought has had an impact upon it, particularly in the wake of the French Revolution. His ideas are especially relevant to conceptions of positive liberty and his scheme is most developed in his seminal work *The Social Contract* (1762). Here Rousseau outlined his vision of a society governed according to the principles of the general will, which would ensure the common good was achieved for all its members. Individuals enter into the social contract by surrendering part of their liberty but, in so doing, they also receive a reciprocal return from the peers and thus retain their freedom.

The most important aspects of Rousseau's ideal that have been influential in later intellectual developments within liberalism, be they supportive or critical, have been the value he placed upon individuals as being self-governing participants in society, and the central supposition of the general will concept that there is a common good that transcends individual desires. The latter point is especially contentious as it presents a fundamental challenge to the value of negative liberty. This early development of the positive sense of liberty was picked up by socialists, such as Charles Fourier, seeking to deconstruct the ideology of liberalism whilst simultaneously laying claim themselves to be the inheritors of the tradition, albeit with a better claim to fulfilling its promises. Many socialist theorists, including Karl Marx, appear to reject the distinction between negative and positive liberty on the grounds that it ignores the true complexity of social relations.

John Stuart Mill

Mill is perhaps the most famed of liberal theorists and must take considerable credit for the renewal of liberalism in the mid-nineteenth century; his work *On Liberty* (1859) is one of the central texts in the canon of liberalism. Mill was especially concerned with the principle of individuality and the way in which ensuring liberty provides for the proper development of the individual. Mill worked in the British empiricist tradition and derived many aspects of his approach from David Hume and John Locke while marrying this to the utilitarianism of Jeremy Bentham. The bringing together of liberalism and utilitarianism in Mill's work was not always successful, and he appears to prioritize individual rights over the principle of utility (that which constitutes the greatest good for the greatest number) in many cases, although he always predicates his arguments on utilitarian grounds rather than those of natural rights as Locke did.

Mill was particularly important in the development of the "harm principle," his version of which holds that society can legitimately restrict the actions of an individual only if these actions harm another. This idea has become a cornerstone of liberal thought, although Mill's own definition of what exactly constitutes harm is open to some debate, and he acknowledges a distinction between the public and private sphere in this respect. His

defense of free speech is also notable, and his ideas about the best structure for democratic society (as expounded in *Considerations on Representative Government*, 1861) have proven resonant, although they have never been adopted in full.

Thomas Hill Green and the “New Liberalism”

Green, influenced by Hegelian approaches to philosophy, was part of the British idealist movement that stimulated the development of ‘new liberalism.’ He was a chief proponent of the view that there was a dialogic between society and individuals and that the former was a formative and important influence upon the latter, while he also recognized that individuals possessed both rights and obligations in relation to their place in society. In advocating a role for the state in the creation and maintenance of conditions suitable for human intellectual flourishing, Green made an important contribution to the positive notion of liberty.

Leonard T. Hobhouse took up Green’s philosophy and replaced the Hegelian basis with a sociological impulse also advocating positive liberty and the need to provide for individual development, or individuation, rather than a purely negative notion of individualism. John A. Hobson also played a key part in this refinement of new liberalism, positing an organic interpretation of society with a general will that underpinned calls for a much-expanded and more interventionist state to redress the social problem of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

Libertarianism

The boundaries between what should be thought of as libertarianism and as liberalism (especially in the classical sense) are somewhat vague, but with respect to the application of theories of liberty, the distinction can be important. Liberalism is typified by a balance between different values—including liberty, but also equality, justice, fraternity, and so on—while libertarianism has emphasized negative liberty above others (and often to the complete exclusion of other values, which are deemed to be relativistic). Friedrich Hayek and Robert Nozick have perhaps been the best-known

proponents of a libertarian attitude toward politics, although their approaches differ considerably. Indeed, there is no single current of libertarianism, and a common divide is often made between “left” and “right” versions of the doctrine and between variants described as minarchist, or favoring a very limited state, and anarchist, consisting of those that condone the abolition of the state. In popular political discourse, the minarchist tendency has proven most resonant, arguing as it does that the state is required to ensure the protection of individual liberty and the principle of self-ownership. This may be contrasted with the classical liberal “night-watchman” state, which, although superficially similar, could well be tasked with other responsibilities in addition to the preservation of liberty. Libertarians always view the state, however small it may be, with at least some degree of suspicion since they view it as having the potential to interfere in individuals’ freedom to act as they choose and as being a method of coercion through its possession of the threat of force. Libertarian conceptions of liberty have gained increasing traction from the middle of the twentieth century to the present day and have probably been most apparent in the economic sphere and the renewed commitment to free markets. More broadly, libertarianism is indicative of a shift away from new liberal notions back towards the more classical theory of liberty.

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See also [Anarchism](#); [Authority](#); [Berlin, Isaiah](#); [Citizenship](#); [Communitarianism and Liberalism](#); [Contract Theory](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Freedom of Expression](#); [General Will](#); [Green, Thomas Hill](#); [Hobhouse, Leonard Trelawny](#); [Ideology](#); [Individualism](#); [Liberalism](#); [Libertarianism](#); [Mill, John Stuart](#); [Pluralism](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Property, Theories of](#); [Republicanism](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Socialism](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [State of Nature](#)

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Abraham Lincoln was the sixteenth president of the United States (1861–65) and is widely considered the quintessential American because of his rise from humble roots and his devotion to human equality. “As I would not be a slave,” Lincoln wrote, “so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy.” His statesmanship was guided by the principles of equal rights and government by consent of the governed found in the Declaration of Independence. He also emphasized the opportunities for self-improvement and advancement created by the principle of equal protection of the laws. “Liberty to all,” Lincoln said, “clears the path for all—gives hope to all—and, by consequence, enterprise, and industry to all” (remarks at Bloomington, IL, November 21, 1860, as quoted in Basler 1953, Vol. 4, 143–44).

He thought these principles should guide the practical administration of the U.S. Constitution. However, slavery was lawful in most of the states at the nation’s founding and was accommodated by the constitutional compromises of 1787. Lincoln believed that despite these initial concessions to slavery, the American founders intended the eventual abolition of slavery. But with the establishment of “king cotton” in the Southern plantation economy, white Southerners began defending slavery, in the words of South Carolina Senator John Calhoun, as a “positive good” for both master and slave. Thus, the United States became divided over the future of slavery in the American republic.

Early in Lincoln's political career as a Whig politician, his speeches focused on political economy. He endorsed Kentucky Senator Henry Clay's "American System," which favored federal and state funding of infrastructure or "internal improvements" to promote every citizen's "right to rise." But in 1854, Illinois Senator Stephen Douglas tried to reduce slavery agitation through a policy of "popular sovereignty." His Kansas-Nebraska Act authorized local settlers—not Congress—to decide the legality of slavery in that territory. In an 1854 speech at Peoria, Illinois, Lincoln appealed to "the Spirit of '76" in an effort to put slavery "back in the course of ultimate extinction." In doing so, he explained, "we shall not only have saved the Union; but we shall have so saved it, as to make, and to keep it, forever worthy of the saving."

His efforts to establish the Republican Party and his debates with Stephen Douglas sought to restrict the spread of slavery. Although he lost his 1858 campaign for the Senate, the national reputation he achieved, coupled with a divided Democratic Party in 1860, propelled him to the presidency in 1860.

His election provoked a backlash by most Southern whites, who asserted a right to secede from the American union and form a separate confederacy. They feared that Lincoln would try to abolish slavery in violation of what they considered their rights as states, and they precipitated a civil war by firing on the federal Fort Sumter, South Carolina. Their refusal to abide by the election constituted a rebellion; as Lincoln stated in his First Inaugural Address, secession was "the essence of anarchy" in its defiance of the Constitution and the rule of law.

In his Gettysburg Address, Lincoln interpreted the rebellion as a test of whether any nation "conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal" could long endure. Earlier that year, he freed most of the 3–4 million American slaves to deprive secessionists of the labor of their "peculiar institution." Lincoln justified his Emancipation Proclamation as a military necessity in accordance with his constitutional role as commander-in-chief. He declared to Congress, "In giving freedom to the slave, we assure freedom to the free—honorable alike in what we give, and what we preserve. We shall nobly save, or meanly lose, the last best

hope of earth” (Second State of the Union Address, 1862). Given the momentous import of Lincoln’s proclamation, it surprisingly lacked the eloquence of the Gettysburg Address. But it was intended to have the force of law, and Lincoln wanted Americans to see his proclamation as consistent with the Constitution and the very rule of law rejected by the rebellious South.

The famous last sentence of the Gettysburg Address joined Lincoln to Thomas Jefferson in his embrace of the robust democratic ideal that had been viewed skeptically by many of the Founders in 1787. Unlike James Madison in Federalist #10, Lincoln at Gettysburg endorsed “government of the people, by the people, for the people” and urged that it not be allowed to perish from the earth.

At his second inauguration, with the war almost over, Lincoln sought to heal the wounds of a divided nation by providing a united way of thinking about slavery and the Civil War. He proposed that slavery was an offense that came due to both Southern and Northern citizens, which God “now wills to remove” through “this mighty scourge of war.” But this position meant that Southerners needed to change their minds about slavery and the meaning of the Union. Lincoln hoped the nation would now become in practice what it had long declared in principle: a nation devoted to protecting the equal rights of all her citizens. The failure of Reconstruction would postpone Lincoln’s hopes for almost a century.

Lucas E. Morel

See also [American Political Thought](#); [Citizenship](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Ethnicity and Political Thought](#); [Federalism](#); [Liberalism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Race and Racism](#)

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Peter Hayes Peter Hayes

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The belief that governments should be democratic, tolerant, and uphold human rights is now almost universally acknowledged. Among the most influential writers to have promoted this agenda in opposition to patriarchal, aristocratic, and narrowly religious principles was the liberal philosopher John Locke (1632–1704).

Locke's three most significant works were published in the space of two years. The *Letter Concerning Toleration* appeared in 1689. This was followed in 1690 with the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Also published in 1690 was *Two Treatises of Government*, including Locke's most celebrated political work, the Second Treatise "Concerning the True Original, Extent, and End of Civil Government."

Locke was born in the village of Wrington, in the county of Somerset in England. He attended Westminster School and went on to become a don at Christchurch College, Oxford. In 1666, Locke met Anthony Ashley Cooper, later the first Earl of Shaftesbury. He became Shaftesbury's secretary and shared in his political ventures, although he still formally retained his position at Christchurch. The reigning monarch, Charles II, had no legitimate children and there was a question over who should succeed him. Locke and Shaftesbury were among those opposed to Charles's brother James acceding to the throne because he was a Catholic. Quite how far they were prepared to go to prevent him from becoming king is unclear, although it was alleged that there was a plot to assassinate both Charles and James.

Early in 1683, Locke thought it prudent to quit England for Holland. Shortly thereafter, several of his political allies were charged with treason and executed. The government ordered that Locke be dismissed from his position at Christchurch and attempted, unsuccessfully, to have him extradited. James went on to become King James II in 1685, but he was ousted by the Protestant William of Orange in the Glorious Revolution of 1688. In 1689, Locke returned to England in high favor and published his famous works, although he cautiously withheld his name from both the *Letter* and *Two Treatises*. He obtained a position on the Board of Trade and contributed to the government's financial policy. Locke never married. He died at Oates, a country house in Essex, and was buried at the church in nearby High Laver.

Toleration

Locke's *Letter Concerning Toleration* advocates religious tolerance, although the argument it contains can readily be extended to toleration more generally. Locke contends that the purpose of the state is to enable its members to pursue life, freedom, health, leisure, and wealth. In fulfilling this function, the state can legitimately punish people but only if they violate the rights of others to enjoy these advantages; it should not punish those who are harmlessly engaged in a voluntary activity. A religious group is a form of voluntary organization joined by people who believe that its doctrine will lead them to salvation. Their activities do not violate the rights of any other member of the state. One's doctrinal views on, for example, transubstantiation, are of no matter to anyone else. The state should, therefore, tolerate religion.

The argument thus far is an elaboration of the idea found in Thomas More's *Utopia* that we have the right to do anything that is not injurious to other people. But Locke has to go further than this to counter the claim that intolerance is justified to promote true religion. Locke agrees that there is "but one truth, one way to heaven" but argues that this does not justify repression because one cannot know that the religion that happens to be favored by the state, while others are suppressed, will guide people along the one true path. The logic of this view is evident, argues Locke, when one considers that many different religions have found favor with those in

power in different states over time: These religions contradict each other, and so they cannot all be right and in fact they must nearly all be wrong. Later liberal theorists, including John Stuart Mill and Karl Popper, extended this line of argument, contending that tolerance should be practiced with respect to all opinions, whether religious or not. This is not because all opinions are equally valid but because one can never be finally sure that one's own opinion is in the right. It is by allowing the free interplay of rival ideas to work themselves through and test themselves out that the truth is most likely to emerge.

Locke acknowledges the potential danger posed to the state by religions that aspire to power. To counteract this danger, Locke argues that the adherents of a religion should operate strictly within the bounds of society. Just as the state should not interfere in the actions of a voluntary religious association, so this association should not attempt to arrogate to itself any powers reserved to the state. In particular, if a religion enjoins its members to obey the head of another state, then it oversteps these bounds and should not be tolerated. This argument is usually read as being directed against Catholicism, although the example given by Locke is of a Muslim living in a Christian state but maintaining an allegiance to the authorities in Turkey. Locke also contends that a religious association should not punish its members. Tolerance of religion is premised on the assumption that religious practices do not threaten people's rights and should not, therefore, be punished by the state. It follows that disputes within a religious denomination do not give any legitimate reason for bishops or others with religious authority to punish dissenting members, although they can be expelled.

Rights and Duties

In Locke's view, the state, like a religious organization, can be compared with a voluntary association, albeit one that has the power to punish by death. However, the state is formed not to punish its members but to protect them. To explain this protective theory of the state, Locke loosely follows the contract theory found in Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* (1651). Like Hobbes, Locke imagines people living in a state of nature where there is no law. The state of nature is transformed into a governed state or

commonwealth when its inhabitants make a contract with each other to designate a ruling body. This is done to ensure mutual protection against the threat of one another. However, where Hobbes had the state of nature as a calamitous war of all against all, Locke contends that a state of nature and state of war are not synonymous. People in Locke's state of nature certainly have reason to be afraid of each other, but enmity is no invariable rule and at least they do not have to deal with a tyrannical ruler. In this relatively pacific state of nature, there is sufficient trust and cooperation to establish the right to life, health, liberty, and property.

The right to liberty is intrinsic to the state of nature as there are no government constraints on people's actions. The only laws are the laws of nature, which enjoin everyone to treat others equally and respect their rights. The right to property is conferred by working on nature in some way. When a man's horse bites the grass, it becomes his. When his servant digs the turf, and when he mines ore from the ground, then these things too become his property. The extent of a person's property acquired in this way has a natural limit in what can be used before it spoils. However, Locke goes on to explain that money lasts indefinitely, which allows us to accumulate property beyond this limit.

The tendency in liberal thought—indeed all modern Western political thought—has been to move away from any theological basis and Locke generally fits this pattern. For example, one might easily conclude that the implicit message of his *Letter Concerning Toleration* is that *none* of the vying religions are true. However, Locke appears to have been sincere in his religious beliefs and, in one important respect, retains religion in his philosophy. Locke justifies the right to life by redefining it as a duty that we owe to God. Our lives, Locke explains, are the property of God, so we should neither kill ourselves nor anyone else.

According to Locke, the rights that we have from birth are not conditional on fulfilling a duty or acting reciprocally. Locke framed the *Treatises* as a response to Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha* (1680). Filmer had argued that the relationship of a king to his subjects was akin to that of a father and a child. Using examples drawn from *Patriarcha*, Locke interprets this to mean that a father, if he so chooses, has the right to sell or castrate his child. Locke

counters that parents have no such horrific rights over their children but rather duties toward them. Parents can exercise their judgment on behalf of the child but only to promote their physical and mental development and enjoyment. It is children, therefore, who have rights over their parents, who have a duty to care for them. These rights are, initially at least, unconditional: One cannot impose conditions on a baby.

Democracy and Revolution

Hobbes's state is formed by an irrevocable transfer of power to a sovereign ruler. By contrast, the power handed to the government in Locke's version of contract theory is provisional. The commonwealth that is formed out of the state of nature has as its purpose upholding the rights of its citizens and, in particular, their right to life, liberty, and property. The people that have agreed to establish the state retain the right to get rid of it if fails to maintain these rights.

Locke's preferred form of government is an elected legislature that meets periodically to create new laws. It is not a professional body and does no more than is necessary before the legislators return to their occupations in society. The laws are upheld by an impartial judiciary, and a permanent executive undertakes the business of government. If the legislature fails to protect the interests of the people, it can be replaced. If the executive branch of the state usurps power, becoming unaccountable and taking over the functions of the legislature, then it can be legitimately overthrown in a revolution. By exceeding its authority, the executive turns to the use of force. This places it in a state of war against the citizens of the state, and under these circumstances, the citizens have a right to respond with force.

Influence and Criticism

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Locke's political influence extended beyond liberal philosophers to include revolutionaries. He was directly involved in the opposition to James II, which culminated in the Glorious Revolution and his writings influenced the American revolutionaries, particularly Thomas Jefferson. Locke's ideas are seen in the

1776 Declaration of Independence, with its right to “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness,” as well as in the separation between church and state, and division of power between executive and legislature in the U.S. Constitution.

Today, a broadly Lockean vision of democracy is either realized or aspired to the world over. Nonetheless, Locke can be criticized from both right and left. On the right, Edmund Burke’s conservative condemnation of those who speculate on abstract universal rights in a way that is divorced from nationality, culture, and tradition might well have been urged with Locke in mind. On the left, Karl Marx saw Locke as a bourgeois ideologue. As Marx wrote in *The Eighteenth Brumaire* (1852), a rising capitalist class in seventeenth-century England clothed its intentions in religion. But “when the real goal had been achieved and the bourgeois transformation of English society had been accomplished, Locke supplanted Habakkuk.” C. B. Macpherson provides a similar analysis, one that focuses on Locke’s defense of property rights and implicit endorsement of wage labor (why does the turf that is dug up in the state of nature not belong to the servant?). These arguments suggest that Locke is, at least, a more complex figure than the saintly champion of freedom that is sometimes portrayed by his admirers. That there is another side to Locke is evident from some of his lesser-known works. The violently punitive recommendations in his *Essay on the Poor Law and Working Schools* (1697) can only be described as inhumane. His insistence on the right to liberty sits somewhat awkwardly with his role in drawing up *The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina* (1669), which grants slaves the right to choose their religion but to be, in all other respects, slaves. Perhaps such things are mere lapses, but it is also possible that they betoken more general problems both in Locke’s thought and in the modern democratic societies that he has helped to forge.

Peter Hayes

See also [Capitalism](#); [Citizenship](#); [Contract Theory](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Equality and Egalitarianism](#); [Justice](#); [Legitimacy](#); [Liberalism](#); [Natural Law](#); [Obedience, Political](#); [Property, Theories of](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [State of Nature](#); [Toleration](#)

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Samir Gandesha Samir Gandesha

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György Lukács (1885–1971), who started and ended his career as a literary theorist and critic, is best known for his influential contributions to discussions of German idealism and Marxist philosophy. Along with Karl Korsch, Lukács was one of the originators of so-called Western Marxism through his key contributions to political thought: *Theory of the Novel* (1916), *History and Class Consciousness* (1923), *The Young Hegel* (1975), and *The Process of Democratization* (1969).

Lukács was born into a wealthy Jewish family in Budapest and studied at the universities of Budapest and Berlin. He personally knew and was influenced by figures such as Ervin Szabó, Max Weber, Georg Simmel, Stefan George, and Ernst Bloch. For much of his life, Lukács was involved as a political figure and public intellectual as cultural commissar of the short-lived revolutionary Hungarian government of Béla Kun in 1918–19, and the reformist government of Imre Nagy that was crushed by the invasion by the USSR in 1956.

After his first book, titled *Soul and Form* (1911), Lukács published *Theory of the Novel*, a key pathway via what he referred to as “Romantic anti-capitalism,” from the detached, ironic aestheticism of his first book to Marxist-Leninist commitment. Anticipating the revolution brewing in the east, Lukács suggests that a return to the epic unity of individual and world could be glimpsed in the works of Fyodor Dostoyevsky and Leo Tolstoy. Lukács’s conversion to Marxism occurred in the course of the Bolshevik

Revolution, and such a conversion was reflected in *History and Class Consciousness* (1923). The most important aspect of this book from the standpoint of political thought is the 65-page essay “Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat.” This essay is a *tour de force* of social theory and philosophy, one that synthesizes Marx’s discussion of commodity fetishism in the first chapter of Vol. I of *Capital* with phenomenology and sociology, to extend and deepen Marx’s argument regarding the fetishization of the commodity in capitalist society. Lukács extended this analysis beyond the narrow ambit of the realm of exchange to an account of how society in its totality becomes “reified” (literally “thingified”). This means that even the most rarefied, autonomous products of bourgeois civilization, for example, art or idealist philosophy, become marked by reification or the “contemplative attitude.” This kind of analysis of cultural forms was far more sophisticated than the crude base/superstructure model that lay at the heart of the Marxism of the Second International, for example. The conception of reification enabled Lukács to engage in a “meta-critique” of philosophy through which he sought to demonstrate that bourgeois philosophy, insofar as it is constituted by insoluble tensions or antinomies that it is unable to solve—for example, the Kantian oppositions between the noumenal/phenomenal, reason/understanding, subject/object—had reached its own immanent limit. The seemingly insoluble oppositions of bourgeois thinking could only truly be overcome in the praxis of the proletariat that, in understanding the world as the product of its practical activity or labor, would attain self-knowledge as the identical subject-object of history.

Lukács’s defense of the Party as the locus of revolutionary consciousness and therefore as substitute for Hegel’s “absolute knowledge” led to charges of Stalinism. Yet, this is not entirely fair, especially if one looks at Lukács’s last work, written in the aftermath of the Prague Spring of 1968 and Alexander Dubček’s attempt to forge a “socialism with a human face,” translated as the *Process of Democratization*. In it, Lukács takes up a position based on Lenin’s new economic policy (NEP) of 1921–28, the termination of which signaled the onset of Stalinization. He also draws on Lenin’s idea of habituation or a new kind of praxis through which a new socialist man would be constituted. In keeping with *History and Class Consciousness*, Lukács repeatedly emphasizes the need for attention to

constituting the subjective preconditions for an authentic socialist democracy. However, Lukács troublingly insisted, though, that these subjective preconditions would have to be introduced into the working class from the outside.

Lukács was criticized by Theodor W. Adorno, an important representative of critical theory, for an all too apologetic “reconciliation with reality”—that is, for far too sanguine an assessment of the capacity of “realist” representations of late capitalist societies to yield genuine knowledge about the historical process and hence the possibilities of transforming it. Perhaps the most influential and important criticism of Lukács, however, was made in the 1960s by Louis Althusser, who used Lukács’s Marxism as a foil for his own structuralist reading of the supposedly scientific, “mature” Marx. More recently, Lukács’s influence has returned in the guise of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri’s notion of the proletariat that turns, however, not on consciousness but on the production of affect, which gives rise to the unified political subject they call, following Baruch Spinoza, “the multitude.”

Samir Gandesha

See also [Alienation](#); [Althusser, Louis](#); [Bureaucracy](#); [Capitalism](#); [Class](#); [Communism](#); [Varieties of](#); [Critical Theory](#); [Dialectic\(s\)](#); [Frankfurt School](#); [Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich](#); [Heidegger, Martin](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Negri, Antonio](#); [Romanticism](#); [Weber, Max](#)

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Paul Le Blanc Paul Le Blanc

Luxemburg, Rosa

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Rosa Luxemburg (1871–1919) was a Marxist theorist, revolutionary leader, and martyr of the international socialist movement. Born in a Poland divided under German and Russian domination, she was involved in revolutionary struggles of each country. From a cultured and well-to-do Jewish family in Warsaw, she attended the University of Zurich in Switzerland, receiving a doctorate in economics. She became active in the revolutionary movement while in her teens, soon rising into the leadership circle of the Social-Democratic Party of the Kingdom of Poland. This group's antinationalist orientation caused it to be outpaced by other currents emphasizing the cause of Polish independence. Luxemburg's working-class internationalism, however, caused her to move into Germany to play a more substantial role in the massive and influential German Social Democratic Party (SPD).

Luxemburg's polemic *Reform or Revolution?* (1899) challenged prominent SPD theoretician Eduard Bernstein, who saw Karl Marx's revolutionary approach as no longer relevant, and argued that a piecemeal reform of capitalism could result in a gradual evolution to socialism. Luxemburg warned that this would push "the labor movement into bourgeois paths" and "paralyze completely the proletarian class struggle," resulting not in the realization of socialism, only in the reform of capitalism. Luxemburg insisted that "capitalism, as a result of its own inner contradictions, moves toward a point when it will be unbalanced, when it will simply become impossible" (ch. 1). Such a crisis would cause its defenders to destroy

whatever social reforms and democracy had been won in previous struggles. Workers would have to use revolutionary action and establish their own political rule to ensure both the political and the economic democracy that she saw as the core of socialism.

Partly on the basis of mass working-class upsurges that swept through eastern and central Europe in 1905, Luxemburg believed capitalism periodically would generate spontaneous insurgencies that should be anticipated, supported, and led by the organized socialist movement. She offered this perspective in *Mass Strike, Political Party, and Trade Unions* (1906), insisting that the more cautious trade union and electoral tactics of the SPD were like the labor of Sisyphus (rolling the boulder up a hill, only to have capitalist dynamics push the gains back down again). Only a revolutionary socialist approach, she insisted, would secure permanent gains for the working class.

Luxemburg's *The Accumulation of Capital* (1913), an economic analysis of imperialism, describes capitalism as an incredibly expansive system with dynamics similar to what would later be termed "globalization." In contrast to the views of Lenin, she saw imperialism as not restricted to "the highest stage" of capitalism. Rather, it is something that one finds at its earliest beginnings—in the period of what Marx called "primitive capitalist accumulation." It would continue nonstop, with increasing velocity and violence. She saw this as intertwined with the rise of militarism—leading to World War I and facing humanity with a choice between "socialism or barbarism," as she put it in *The Crisis in the German Social Democracy*, also known as "The Junius Pamphlet" (1915).

More than a theorist, writer, and educator, Luxemburg was also an organizer and activist, imprisoned more than once—by Russian authorities in the wake of the 1905 revolutionary upsurge, and by German authorities for her uncompromising opposition to World War I. She helped to form the Spartakusbund (the Spartacus League, named after the rebellious leader of Roman slaves), which rallied revolutionary socialists—workers as well as intellectuals—to do what the SPD had ceased to do: oppose war, imperialism, and capitalism.

Despite her criticisms regarding the policies of Lenin and Trotsky (particularly around their restrictions of democracy), she was a supporter of their 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. Shortly before her death, she helped to found the German Communist Party.

World War I and defeat had caused the German monarchy to collapse, amid an upwelling of revolutionary sentiment among German workers. Luxemburg was especially critical of secret deals made between SPD moderates and the German military to draw this energy into “safe” channels of a new Weimar Republic. In her view, a working-class revolution for socialism was on the agenda.

In January 1919, against Luxemburg’s warnings, some of her comrades, led by Karl Liebknecht, became involved in a premature uprising. In the wake of the revolt’s suppression, paramilitary groups (which consisted largely of future Nazis) organized under the name of the Freikorps systematically rounded up and murdered left-wing “troublemakers.” Luxemburg and Liebknecht were among the victims.

Paul Le Blanc

See also [Capitalism](#); [Communism](#), [Varieties of](#); [Empire and Political Thought](#); [Lenin and Leninism](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Revolution](#); [Russian Revolution](#), [Political Thought of the](#); [Social Democracy](#); [Socialism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Clive E. Hill Clive E. Hill

Macaulay, Thomas Babington

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Macaulay, Thomas Babington

One of the most eminent historians in early Victorian Britain, Thomas Macaulay (1800–59) was an orthodox, rather than a pioneering, liberal, with little sympathy for the democratic movements of his time. His significance for political theory today is not a result of his generally derivative opinions on normative questions but of his ability to shape a persuasive and entertaining narrative of British national history that foregrounded the virtues of aristocracy and empire.

Macaulay was born in Leicestershire. His father was a wealthy Scottish merchant and member of the evangelical “Clapham Sect,” while his mother’s family comprised successful booksellers from Bristol. The younger Macaulay was a student at two minor private schools in Southern England (1812–18) before he enrolled at Cambridge University (1818–24). In later life, in addition to writing history, he became a literary essayist, a poet, and a Whig cabinet minister (1839–41 and 1846–47). Macaulay served as a Member of Parliament three times (1830–34, 1839–47, and 1852–56) and was made a peer in 1857. In the 1830s, he developed an important association with Britain’s Indian colony, serving as a member (later Secretary) of the Board of Control for India (1832–34) and then as a member of the Supreme Council of India (1834–38), a position that involved traveling to the subcontinent to participate in educational and legal reforms. His literary reputation was initially established by various essays for *The Edinburgh Review* in the 1820s and cemented by *Lays of Ancient Rome* (1842) and *Critical and Historical Essays* (1843). Four volumes of

his masterpiece, *The History of England*, appeared during his lifetime (two in 1848 and two in 1855), the fifth being published posthumously in 1861. At the height of his fame, Macaulay died of heart disease in 1859.

Macaulay's antidemocratic liberalism emphasized the desirability of individual freedom, minimal government, the rule of law, and proportionate punishments for breaches of the law, and many of his views followed the conventional wisdom of his time. His opposition to adult male suffrage in the debates prior to the 1832 Reform Act is well documented, and he was a free trader but not a pacifist. He continued his family's traditional opposition to legal slavery throughout his public career. He argued against procedural discrimination against Jews, Catholics, and nonconformists in the "emancipation" debates of the 1820s, and (on at least one occasion) he deviated from laissez-faire orthodoxy by supporting the Ten Hours Act of 1847.

Macaulay's historical and literary texts were usually highly political, not merely in the sense that they dealt with monarchy, war, and government, but also because they presumed a certain worldview that seemed particularly favorable to the British empire in his own time. This anglicized version of Enlightenment optimism has often been described by scholars as "the Whig interpretation of history"; it was a view that assumed that, other things being equal, material, moral, and scientific progress was constant and ongoing, provided that politicians avoided the kind of extremist policies that confused anarchy with liberty and despotism with civil order. Macaulay was particularly influenced by the Scottish historical novelist Sir Walter Scott, and *The History of England*, which covers the period 1688–1702, was notable for its clarity of language, strong pictorial imagery, and emphasis on characterization and biographical anecdotes (often presented like the scenes of a play), all designed to enlist the reader's imagination and sympathy.

Over the years, Macaulay's "Whig interpretation" has met with many different criticisms. He has been accused, for example, of giving unjustified praise to Whigs and Protestants, of incorrectly assuming that late-seventeenth-century England made a unique contribution to human civilization; of glossing over the less desirable aspects of British

commercialism, militarism, and imperialism; of not properly documenting his sources; and of neglecting sociological and economic factors in history. In his defense, it can be argued that *The History* praised several moderate Tories and Whigs (also known as “trimmers”), that it acknowledged “great national crimes and follies” in America and Ireland, and that Macaulay was in effect writing a piece of literature and was never engaged in the project of “objective” history. Nevertheless, Macaulay’s pleas for the superiority of English bourgeois culture and British parliamentary liberalism seem dated today, and he probably erred in treating the events of the 1680s and 1690s as more significant for nineteenth-century Britain than those of the 1640s.

Clive E. Hill

See also [Liberalism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Progress](#)

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Madison, James

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Madison, James

James Madison (1751–1836) was a planter, constitutional theorist, legislator, and the fourth president of the United States. Madison's home all his life was in Orange County, Virginia, on a plantation, Montpelier, worked by perhaps 100 slaves. Although he abhorred slavery, he remained a Virginia planter, working within the traditional family-based political system and unwilling to forgo the economic advantages that slavery offered to his family.

Madison received a thorough classical education in Greek and Latin, and he learned Christian precepts from his clergymen teachers at The College of New Jersey at Princeton. Madison also read Francis Bacon, John Locke, Isaac Newton, Jonathan Swift, Richard Steele, David Hume, Montesquieu, Voltaire, and others who fashioned the Enlightenment view, which became his own, although his political thinking always rested as well on Aristotle's understanding of "man as a political animal."

In 1776, Madison was elected to the Virginia convention that drafted a new state constitution. In 1780, he was elected a Virginia delegate to the Continental Congress, where he soon became convinced that a stronger frame of government was needed to replace the Articles of Confederation.

At the Constitutional Convention of 1787, he supported a strengthened executive, a broadly based House of Representatives, long terms in the Senate, and an independent federal judiciary. In his famous Federalist Paper

#10, Madison offered the idea that the multiplicity of special interests (“factions”) in a large republic could be made to counteract and neutralize one another, thus preventing any of them from tyrannizing over the others. Here and elsewhere in *The Federalist*, notably in #51, Madison argued for the system of governmental checks and balances that have come to constitute the U.S. federal system. Despite Madison’s sometimes negative, partially Hobbesian view of human nature, the solution he fashioned was almost the opposite of the all-powerful Hobbesian leviathan.

Madison formulated strategy for supporters of the proposed Constitution, using the Federalist papers to justify it, to explain the novel federal system being proposed, and to defend the envisioned House of Representatives and Senate while warning against the danger of an all-powerful legislature. Then, as a member of the first U.S. House of Representatives, Madison proposed new revenue laws, ensured the president’s responsibility for the conduct of the executive branch, sponsored the Bill of Rights, drafted George Washington’s inaugural address, and helped the president make the precedent-setting appointments of his first term.

Madison, along with Thomas Jefferson, organized politically against *Federalist* co-author and Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton’s financial plans for a national bank and against his broad interpretation of governmental powers under the Constitution. This move culminated in the development of the new Democratic-Republican Party, creating party strife with the Federalists—a conflict that ran counter to Madison’s idea of good government. He nonetheless persisted in developing a stricter constitutional theory that sought to limit the powers of the national government to those more explicitly granted in the document, although he was not dogmatic on this point.

In 1798, as a member of the Virginia House of Delegates, Madison opposed the Alien and Sedition Acts, which he believed severely threatened free government by undermining the right of free speech and other rights guaranteed in the Bill of Rights. In the Virginia Resolutions and Report of 1798 and 1800, he condemned the Sedition Act’s restrictions on freedom of expression.

As Secretary of State in Jefferson's administration, 1801–09, Madison guided negotiations to purchase Louisiana in 1803 and favored the Embargo of 1807, a further effort to apply his cherished principle that the United States could protect its rights by commercial policy rather than resort to war.

Elected President in 1809, Madison saw his diplomatic efforts fail to stop depredations by European powers, especially Britain. He asked a divided Congress for a declaration of war against England in 1812. Early in the war, well-led British troops generally bested American forces, and in August 1814, a small British force burned the public buildings in Washington. American victories elsewhere in 1814 led to an honorable peace treaty signed with Britain in Ghent, Belgium, on Christmas Eve 1814.

In his last two years as President, Madison proposed a recharter of the National Bank, a moderate protective tariff, federal support for building roads and canals (requiring an amendment to the Constitution), a national university in the District of Columbia, and a strengthened military establishment.

Retired to his Virginia farm, Madison helped Thomas Jefferson found the University of Virginia, attended the Virginia constitutional convention of 1829, and defended the union against the doctrine of nullification. He died on June 28, 1836, the last survivor of the founders of the American republic.

In his understanding of the Constitution, Madison always remained a child of the Enlightenment. He took as his own conscious intellectual framework the natural-law philosophy. He believed in the immutable natural rights of humans, and he held that the Constitution was fundamental law and hence was not changeable at the whim of a mere majority of the people. Higher law was not set by civil society, the Constitution was more than what the Supreme Court said it was, and principles of right and wrong were not determined by the expedient of head-counting. The dogmas of human freedom and liberty of conscience, for example, to which Madison adhered as gospel, were not simple rules of thumb that a particular society might find useful at a given time, and that might be discarded as times changed. Even within this view of higher, or natural law, though, Madison's long

political experience left him with an ambivalent understanding of human nature as a combination of good and bad tendencies. When Madison is compared with more modern thinkers, his thought is closest to that of Protestant theologian Reinhold Niebuhr.

Ralph Ketcham

See also [Constitutionalism](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Liberalism](#); [Republicanism](#); [Separation of Powers](#); [State, Theories of the](#)

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Clive E. Hill Clive E. Hill

Maine, Henry

Maine, Henry

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Maine, Henry

Henry Sumner Maine (1821–88) was a nineteenth-century legal scholar who argued that, in premodern societies, rights and duties were attached to inherited positions within tribes and families (a hierarchy of *status*), while in modern societies, rights and duties were distributed more efficiently—in terms of both economic productivity and personal liberty—as a result of free agreements (*contracts*) made between individuals. This was a particular example of his more general belief that both human societies and human legal systems evolved in phases that were intimately interconnected.

Born in Bedfordshire, England, Maine was educated at the Christ's Hospital School in Sussex (1829–40) and at Cambridge University (1840–44). In 1845, he became a junior tutor at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, and he was later Regius Professor of Civil Law within the University (1847–54). Subsequently, Maine became a barrister (1850), and from 1852 to 1862, he served in London as a Reader in Roman law and jurisprudence for the Council of Legal Education. Between 1862 and 1869, he lived in India, where he served as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Calcutta and as a legal member of the Governor-General's council. From 1869 to 1877, he held the position of Corpus Professor of Jurisprudence at Oxford University, becoming Sir Henry Maine in 1871. Finally, he returned to Trinity Hall as Master of his old Cambridge college from 1879 until 1888. His numerous books include *Ancient Law* (1861), *Village Communities* (1871), *Lectures on the Early History of Institutions* (1875), *Dissertations on Early Law and Custom* (1883), and *Popular Government* (1885). In the

second half of his life, he acted as an advisor on colonial policy to many different British politicians and administrators. He married in 1847 and had two sons.

Maine's most famous book was *Ancient Law*, a pioneering study in comparative and historical jurisprudence, whose approach was encapsulated in its lengthy subtitle, *Its Connection with the Early History of Society, and Its Relation to Modern Ideas*. Throughout his career, Maine assumed that there had always been an intimate and important connection between "social life," in a broad sense of those words, and the coercive rules known as "laws," and that modern ideas about legislation (and other kinds of law) also bore the imprint of this connection. For example, *Ancient Law* included the famous aphorism that the "movement of the progressive societies has hitherto been a movement from *Status to Contract*" (Maine [1861] 1986, 140–41), a phrase that encapsulated Maine's central argument about the change in attitudes to rights and duties over time. Nevertheless, Maine's last book, *Popular Government*, was much more pessimistic about the result of this evolution for Western civilization in his own times, and it argued that, in both Britain and the United States, recent state legislation was tending to supplant contract as the regulatory principle of society by assigning rights and duties arbitrarily, thereby returning society to a new kind of "status" system.

According to Maine, at certain points in history, force and power had been dominant factors in explaining social change, while at others, legal systems—and in particular certain legal conceptions, such as fictions, equity, and legislation—had been relatively effective in changing human behavior. However, legal and quasi-legal language (such as "the law of nature") often entered political debate directly with uncertain and sometimes unfortunate consequences. It is thanks to arguments like these that today much of Maine's academic and policy work seems both complacent and conservative; his political sympathies were Peelite in the 1840s and 1850s, but anti-Gladstonian by the 1880s; and he seems to have taken the existence of the British Empire as a *sine qua non* of future progress in both India and elsewhere. Yet he did express some sympathy for the legal disabilities of women (which he traced back to the ancient patriarchal family, and to Roman and Canon Law in Chapter Five of *Ancient Law*), and Maine usually

assumed that a complete system of free agreements between individuals would avoid the worst evils of class government, which he periodically referred to in his writings. Contemporary students of both the institutional and sociological branches of political science should find some inspiration in Maine's jurisprudence, in particular, when they interface with linguistics, anthropology, and history.

Clive E. Hill

See also [Authority](#); [Conservatism](#); [Contract Theory](#); [Law and Political Thought](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Progress](#)

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Carolina Armenteros Carolina Armenteros

Maistre, Joseph de

Maistre, Joseph De

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Maistre, Joseph de

Joseph de Maistre (1753–1821) was a Roman Catholic counter-revolutionary thinker primarily remembered as an early proponent of conservatism, sociology, and ultramontanist (which emphasized the authority of the pope in the Catholic Church and in European politics). He was born and raised in Chambéry, then part of the kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia. Trained for the magistracy at the University of Turin, he put together one of the finest libraries in Savoy and eventually became a senator of the province.

When Savoy was invaded by the French revolutionary army in September 1792, Maistre became the only senator who chose to exile himself and his family rather than live under a revolutionary government. Having fled to Switzerland, he began there a new career as a counter-revolutionary propagandist. His *Letters of a Savoyard Royalist* (1793) first publicized his monarchist views, but it was with the *Considerations on France* (1797) that he came to prominence. In this pamphlet, Maistre theorized the French Revolution as a providentially regenerative punishment with the power to exhaust all passions. He also predicted that, with time, the counter-revolution would triumph and the monarchy would be reestablished in France—a prediction that brought him fame as a political prophet when Louis XVIII returned to the French throne in 1814.

The *Considerations* was informed by two treatises that Maistre composed in 1794–96. Published posthumously, *On the State of Nature* and *On the*

Sovereignty of the People are refutations of Jean-Jacques Rousseau that contain most of Maistre's political thought in embryo. Developing a historical view of politics, they also reveal his theoretical contribution to the birth of moral statistics.

In 1799, after fleeing France's revolutionary armies for months, Maistre settled in Sardinia, where he served as regent until 1802 before being sent to St Petersburg, Russia, as the extraordinary envoy of Piedmont-Sardinia. He remained in Russia for 12 years, moving in aristocratic circles and meeting learned people from all over Europe. It was the most intellectually productive period of his life.

Maistre expressed his constitutionalism in his *Essay on the Generative Principle of Political Constitutions* (composed 1809). Eulogizing the English constitution as history's work of art, the *Essay* argued that unwritten constitutions are superior to written ones because, encoded in the hearts of peoples and the customs of nations, they are creative like God's living, spoken word. Written constitutions, by contrast, are less effective because once laws and principles have to be written down, they lose by the same token their power to sway. This, he opined, was why France's revolutionary governments produced written legislation in unprecedented quantities but remained powerless to impose the order for which all government must strive.

In St Petersburg, Maistre also composed the *Examination of the Philosophy of Bacon* (completed 1814), which refutes Baconian epistemology with a view to sapping the theory of knowledge of the *Encyclopédie*—and, by extension, the science-based system of education that Alexander I's minister, Mikhail Speransky, was devising for Russia. Against Bacon's materialism and indirect empiricism, Maistre defended innatism, Aristotelian logic, direct empiricism, and the study of the classics.

Maistre's *St Petersburg Dialogues, or Conversations on the Temporal Government of Providence* (1821), is a Neoplatonic theodicy that focuses on the problem of evil to describe a moralized universe where prayer, sacrifice, and prophecy are determining historical agents. Its relatively peaceful, Leibnizian vision is complemented by that of the *Clarification Concerning Sacrifices* (1821), a mystical text that is also the first treatise in

the sociology of violence. In the latter, Maistre puts forward the theory of the reversibility of merits: that the just suffer to save the guilty, and that the practice of sacrifice reintegrates society.

Maistre founded political ultramontanism in his magnum opus, *The Pope* (1819), which argues that the popes created European political culture by founding European monarchy, and that the tension between church and state that characterized European history across the centuries encouraged a uniquely libertarian politics. In the Middle Ages, kings and subjects were bound by a divine law that forbade the former from becoming despots, and the latter from rebelling. In modernity, however, state power grew unchecked as monarchs subjugated churches, thereby creating the conditions necessary for revolutionary tyranny. Maistre offered solutions to this conundrum by looking forward to a new age when the popes would become moderators of political crisis.

In all, Maistre was an original and versatile thinker whose thought is distinguished by its extremely diverse theoretical posterity and by the interest it inspired in friends and foes alike: Royalists, socialists, Hegelians, Romantics, positivists, sociologists, and traditionalists all wrote on him in the nineteenth century, as did fascists, monarchists, and Marxists in the twentieth.

Carolina Armenteros

See also [Conservatism](#); [French Revolution](#); [Political Thought of the Nineteenth-Century](#); [Political Thought](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Romanticism](#); [State](#); [Theories of the](#)

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Geoffrey Gilbert Geoffrey Gilbert

Malthus, Thomas Robert

Malthus, Thomas Robert

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Malthus, Thomas Robert

Thomas Robert Malthus (1766–1834) is notable for having made *population*—its size and growth rate—a central consideration in the analysis of a wide range of economic and social issues. One of the founding members of the British classical school of economics, Malthus is credited with co-discovering the marginal theory of rent and with demonstrating an understanding of the instability of capitalism far in advance of his fellow political economists. But it is mainly for his incorporation of population into policy analysis that he has a place in any complete account of the development of a conservative perspective in nineteenth-century British political thought.

Malthus was born in rural southern England in 1766, graduated from Cambridge University in 1788, was ordained a deacon in the Church of England in 1789, and published the first (anonymous) edition of his *Essay on the Principle of Population* in 1798. He married in 1804 and the following year was appointed to the chair in modern history and political economy at the East India College, Haileybury, northeast of London, a position he held for the rest of his life. His major work in economics, *Principles of Political Economy*, was published in 1820. Malthus died in 1834 while on a visit to his wife's family near Bath, England, and his remains are interred in the Bath Abbey.

In the 1798 *Essay* Malthus took issue with the utopian optimism of the French political visionary Condorcet and, more pointedly, with the English

philosopher and novelist William Godwin. Both Condorcet and Godwin hoped and expected to see radical changes in society through a natural evolution toward more egalitarian forms of property-holding. Their utopianism also found expression in some peculiar ideas about organic human perfectibility, such as lengthened life spans, reduced need for sleep, and a lessening of sexual appetite. In *Essay*, Malthus dismissed such notions as unfounded and unrealistic. Just as unfounded, he added, were sweeping claims that society was headed toward indefinite improvement. A utopian society, he contended, would collapse under the weight of excess numbers. It was an argument previously rehearsed (1761) by the Scotsman Robert Wallace but given additional clarity and force in Malthus's hands.

In Chapter X of his 1798 essay, Malthus launched a frontal assault on Godwin's "beautiful society" characterized by equalization of property and the absence of the marriage contract. According to Malthus, with property shared by all according to their wants and not according to their contributions to production, total output of food and other goods would surely fall. Meanwhile, with the marriage contract put aside, and with it the clear obligation to support one's own children, normal constraints on early marriage would no longer be felt, and population would take off. The pressure to grow more food to feed the ever-expanding population would run up against diminishing returns in agriculture. Sadly, "within fifty years, violence, oppression, falsehood, misery, every hateful vice, and every form of distress" would return, and all on account of "laws inherent in the nature of man" (Malthus 1798, 80).

The antiradical tone and substance of the 1798 essay, with its implicit—verging on explicit—endorsement of the "established administration of property," suggests the usefulness of Malthusian modes of argument in the hands of later political disputants. Any payment to labor in excess of a subsistence wage, for example, may be seen as self-defeating if, as Malthus sketched out in Chapter II, it would lead to a long-term labor supply response that would ultimately push the wage rate back down to the subsistence level. That line of argument lies behind what came to be known as the "iron law of wages." (Malthus himself did not name the "law.")

Malthus's conservative credentials are further demonstrated in his outspoken opposition to the English Poor Law, announced in the first edition and strengthened in subsequent editions of *Essay*. In 1798, Malthus attacked Prime Minister William Pitt's 1796 proposal to adjust Poor Law payments to the number of children in a claimant's family. That, argued Malthus, would offer a premium to child-bearing. As such, it would raise demand for food and do nothing to increase supply. In the second edition of *Essay* (1803), Malthus went further, calling for the outright abolition of the Poor Law, although on a gradual schedule that would give everyone plenty of advance notice. His anti-Poor Law views have generally been seen as helping to shape the political climate in which the Poor Law Amendment Act, tightening the terms on which the poor could claim assistance from the state, was passed in 1834.

Geoffrey Gilbert

See also [Condorcet](#); [Conservatism](#); [Darwinism and Social Darwinism](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [French Revolution](#); [Political Thought of the](#); [Godwin, William](#); [Human Nature](#); [Theories of](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Utopianism](#); [Welfare State](#); [Theories of the](#)

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Catherine Lynch Catherine Lynch

Mao Zedong

Mao zedong

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Mao Zedong

The achievements and calamities of the Chinese Communist Revolution were intertwined with the political thought of Mao Zedong (1893–1976). Mao's ideas enabled the success of a massive peasant movement, resulting in a historic social transformation that vastly improved the lives of millions of people. In the last two decades of his life, Mao's concepts became entangled with huge disruptions in China at great human cost. Maoism had worldwide impact, appearing in different guises and degrees in France, Albania, Peru, Nepal, Cambodia, the Philippines, and India, as well as in Argentina, Chile, the United States, and the Basque country.

Born into a well-to-do peasant family, Mao joined the tiny elite studying in modern schools. After the republican 1911 Revolution and the New Culture Movement of 1915–19, a radicalized Mao joined the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) at its founding in 1921. Successful at organizing urban trade unions, Mao worked on the 1923 alliance between the Nationalist Party and the CCP before withdrawing briefly from politics. The emergence of a militant peasant movement in the summer of 1925 brought Mao back to activism, this time as one of the earliest and strongest advocates of peasants as a revolutionary force.

Over two decades of war—civil war against the Nationalists (1927–49) and the Anti-Japanese War (1937–45)—Mao moved from the sidelines to the center of the CCP. He headed armed resistance from rural bases to combine social and national revolutions, envisaging a protracted war that would

culminate with the countryside encircling the cities. After the epic Long March (1934–35), with the Communists driven north by Nationalist armies to a remote base in Yan'an, Mao wrote theoretically on warfare and dialectical materialism, arguing for the Sinification of Marxism. By 1943, he held the highest formal leadership positions, and in 1945, Mao Zedong Thought officially became the Party's guide.

Following the establishment of the People's Republic of China as a unified nation in 1949, after the defeats of Japan and the Nationalist Party, Mao presided over the elimination of the gentry as a class and the restoration of the economy, at first envisioning gradual industrialization on the Soviet model. By 1957, Mao had become disillusioned by the social effects of the Soviet approach and turned to a utopian egalitarian vision with the Great Leap Forward (1958–60).

Radical decentralization and Herculean combat against nature in the Great Leap produced economic chaos and starvation. Mao, having then retreated from direct political activity, became increasingly alarmed at departures from revolutionary goals and, by 1962, began to speak of class struggle within the party itself. Mao's ideological critique meshed with party factionalism and both merged with broad socioeconomic fractures into the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966–69/76), leading to widespread violence and deep social trauma. After Mao's death, the CCP used his thought, stripped of radical elements, for ritualized, nationalistic ends, while his broader intellectual impact continued to be felt in complex ways.

Before becoming a Marxist, Mao Zedong showed traits that would mark his mature thought. In a time of collapsing social norms, his early writings stressed the active self and individual will. Mao emphasized the present moment in a cosmos of motion and conflicting dualities. Self-realization and moral integrity arose out of an unending process of overcoming obstacles.

These early concepts, fed by concrete military experience as well as classical military writings and Daoism, fledged in the dialectical materialism of "On Practice" and "On Contradiction" (1937), essays that in the 1960s would influence Louis Althusser and Alain Badiou. A materialist epistemology of the unity of knowledge and action and a dialectical system

of contradictions, Mao's was a method for action and struggle, stressing humans' conscious dynamic role combined with practical experience, rather than a static conceptual system.

Departing from Marx's historical materialism, Mao's thought resembled aspects of Russia's Narodism. Mao looked to peasants, not to the proletariat, for the agent of radical action and took China's backwardness as a virtue, allowing the bypassing of capitalism en route to socialism and beyond. He saw class in terms of political attitude rather than of socioeconomic structure and severed Lenin's direct connection between party and class. Mao envisioned an unending revolutionary process in which, led by consciousness, changes in the relations of production preceded changes in the means of production. History was not determinative as a restraint on, or a guarantor of, the future.

Having earlier grounded the active self in practical experience, the later Mao tilted toward an unrestrained voluntarism while doubting objective forces of materialist history. Reminiscent of Georg Lukács and Antonio Gramsci, he emphasized subjectivism, cultural critique, and the remolding of humanity. Remaking the human spirit through overcoming hardships and through self-sacrifice in serving others resonated with a traditional moralism and colored Maoist politics.

Reactions to Mao match the extent of his impact on human lives. Abroad, dramatic criticisms of his personal and political life, dismissive of ideas, have mixed with more nuanced assessments of Mao's ideas in relation to their implementation.

To China's population, Maoist ideals have offered a counterpoint to increasing social division, while the neo-Maoism of a small group of intellectuals took political shape in the failed ambitions of Bo Xilai, Chongqing party secretary from 2007 to 2012, who deployed Cultural Revolution tropes in a Red Culture movement.

Catherine Lynch

See also [Chinese Cultural Revolution](#); [Chinese Marxism](#); [Chinese Political Thought](#); [Communism](#), [Varieties of](#); [Empire and Political Thought](#); [Lenin](#)

[and Leninism](#); [Marx, Karl](#)

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John Abromeit John Abromeit

Marcuse, Herbert

Marcuse, Herbert

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Marcuse, Herbert

Herbert Marcuse was born to an affluent assimilated Jewish family in Berlin in 1898. During the revolutionary activity at the end of World War I, Marcuse served briefly in a soldiers' council, where he participated in the street fighting that convulsed Berlin at this time. In the following years, Marcuse pursued a doctorate in modern German literature at Humboldt University in Berlin and Albert Ludwig University in Freiburg. In 1922, he graduated *magna cum laude* with a dissertation on "The German Artist-Novel," which was influenced by Georg Lukács's early *Theory of the Novel* and which anticipated many of his own later writings on the critical and utopian role of autonomous art in modern capitalist societies.

Like many other intellectuals of his generation, Marcuse was greatly impressed with Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time*, published in 1927. Marcuse returned to Freiburg in 1928 to study philosophy with Heidegger, and in 1933, he completed under Heidegger's direction a *Habilitationsschrift* (a second dissertation required for German academics) on *Hegel's Ontology and the Theory of Historicity*. Yet Marcuse's enthusiasm for Heidegger's work declined steadily while he was in Freiburg, and when the latter openly embraced National Socialism in 1933, Marcuse chose to accept a position with Max Horkheimer's Institute for Social Research, which was in the process of relocating from Frankfurt to New York City. During the 1930s, Marcuse wrote a series of philosophical essays for the Institute's now-famous journal, the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*. Marcuse's work in the 1920s had been heavily influenced

by the phenomenological and vitalist critiques of positivism that dominated philosophical discussions in the Weimar Republic. By contrast, his essays from the 1930s were characterized by a positive reassessment of the tradition of philosophical rationalism. This reassessment culminated in a major study, *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory* (1941), which was intended to demonstrate historically the Hegelian-Marxist foundations of the Institute's work and to dispel the myth—widespread in Anglo-American academic circles—that Hegel was a precursor of National Socialist authoritarianism.

In 1942, Marcuse accepted a position at the Office of Strategic Studies (OSS), which had been recently founded by the U.S. State Department to conduct intelligence activities against the Axis powers. After leaving the OSS in 1951, Marcuse conducted research at Harvard and Columbia universities for his study *Soviet Marxism: A Critical Analysis* (1958). Striving to maintain independence in the polarized political and intellectual climate of the early Cold War, Marcuse analyzed the Soviet Union largely in terms of the triumph of technological rationality, whose repressive manifestations could also be found in the West. During this time, Marcuse also completed *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (1955). Drawing on the Freudian-Marxist theoretical position developed by Horkheimer and Erich Fromm in the 1930s, Marcuse argued that modern capitalist societies were now in a position to abolish the “surplus repression” and alienated labor that had been necessary in their early phase of historical development and thereby to create new, more emancipated forms of society and subjectivity.

Marcuse's next book, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (1964), contained a scathing critique of contemporary Western capitalism, which, according to Marcuse, used its massive intellectual and technological resources not to abolish poverty and exploitation but instead to create more sophisticated forms of social domination both at home and abroad. Marcuse's sophisticated critique of this “society without opposition” quickly established him as one of the most important theoretical points of reference for the New Left and the burgeoning global protest movements against global capitalism and its repressive offshoots. In the following years, Marcuse became an active,

public supporter of these movements. He appeared frequently in Europe and the United States at student-initiated protests and discussions, and he devoted his next two short books—*An Essay on Liberation* (1969) and *Counter-Revolution and Revolt* (1973)—to working through political, philosophical, and social-psychological problems that had been raised practically by the 1960s movements.

On the other hand, Marcuse had always been critical of anti-intellectual and sectarian tendencies in the protest movements, and when these tendencies gained the upper hand in the early 1970s, Marcuse distanced himself from them. In response to the violence of the Red Army Faction in Germany in the mid-1970s, Marcuse proclaimed unequivocally, “Murder is not a political weapon” (Marcuse 1977, 7). Accordingly, Marcuse viewed feminism and the new ecological consciousness as the most promising offspring of the 1960s protest movements. Marcuse’s final book, *The Aesthetic Dimension: Towards a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics* (1978), brought him full circle to his earliest concerns with autonomous art as a “second dimension” of reality, which stubbornly preserves the objective possibility of overcoming the unnecessarily repressive, exploitative, and alienating forms of human relations developed in modern capitalist societies.

John Abromeit

See also [Critical Theory](#); [Dialectic\(s\)](#); [Frankfurt School](#); [Freud and Social Theory](#); [German Political Thought](#); [Hegelianism](#); [Heidegger](#); [Martin](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#)

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Market Socialism

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Market Socialism

At its simplest, market socialism describes an economic and political system that combines the principles of social ownership of the economy with the continuing allocation of commodities (sometimes including the allocation of labor) through the mechanism of markets. Socialism has often been seen as a political and economic creed which is defined by its hostility to the existence of markets and their outcomes but, beyond a utopian vision of a world totally transformed, advocates of socialism have almost always envisaged *some* role for private possessions and for markets (in foodstuffs and other goods for small-scale private consumption, for example). And for market socialists, it is not markets but capitalist markets; that is, markets which inscribe the social and economic power of private capital, that are objectionable. Market socialists offer an alternative model in which markets are combined with varying forms of the social ownership of capital. Among these supporters of a socialist alternative, markets thus re-constituted are recommended not only as a way of attaining greater economic efficiency under socialism but also as a way of securing greater individual liberty or a more equal value of liberty, of promoting effective democracy and of enhancing social justice. One further key virtue of market socialism among its contemporary advocates is its political feasibility. For them, it is a form of socialism which could attract popular support and be implemented in a world something like that which we know and inhabit.

The very earliest socialists, writing in the 1820s and 1830s, did not generally look to the state as a vehicle for socialist transformation and there

is a non-statist tradition of reconciling markets with socialism which both predated and survived the rise of state socialism from the mid-nineteenth century onwards (for instance, in the writings of the British Owenite William Thompson). Both as consumers but more especially as producers, the idea of workers' co-operatives was an important theme in socialist thinking in the nineteenth century. Examples can be found in the writings of Charles Fourier, in the practice of the Rochdale Pioneers and in the life and work of Robert Owen. We find it also in the mutualism or workers' self-organization advocated by Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, itself the forerunner of a continental tradition of *autogestion* or workers' self-management. But the history of a distinctive idea of market socialism really begins as a reaction to the emergence of state socialism, above all in its authoritarian Soviet form, and the inefficiencies and inequities associated (in the eyes of its critics, necessarily associated) with this form of a centrally planned economy. Thus the first reported use of the specific term *Marktsozialismus* is attributed to the German economist Eduard Heimann, writing in 1922.

Langean Market Socialism: The Socialist calculation Debate

This first manifestation of market socialism is associated, above all, with the work of the Polish economist Oskar Lange, writing in the 1930s. Lange was himself responding to a criticism made of the newly emerging centrally managed economies by the Austrian economist Ludwig von Mises, who insisted that without markets and their price signals, there could be no rational economic calculation. In essence, he suggested that the idea of a rationally planned economy was an oxymoron. Lange's response was to insist that rational calculation was indeed possible under socialism because the state's Central Planning Board could act as a surrogate for the market by setting prices (and the institutional context for socialist enterprises) and then adjusting these prices through a repeated "trial and error" procedure, so as to respond effectively to fluctuations in supply and demand. The ensuing argument has been labeled the Socialist Calculation Debate. In general, the judgment has been that Lange probably got the math right—it was possible to imagine an enormous simultaneous equation through which prices could be calculated—but that his solution failed as a response to the

Austrian economists' challenge, not least because markets did very much more than disclose prices; their disequilibria showed where unmet demand existed and provided both the signals and the incentives for innovative and entrepreneurial behavior.

As well as attempts to inaugurate something like mutualism elsewhere in the world, there were from time to time through the following half-century attempts to effect some sort of decentralization of economic activity in the Soviet bloc—though these tended to be undermined by the political imperative to retain control from the center. Where nationalization took place in the West, both before and after the Second World War, it tended to follow a public corporation rather than a workers' control model. By far the most widely discussed experiment in this period was the experience of workers' self-management in Yugoslavia which followed the latter's partial break from the influence of the Soviet Union after the end of the Second World War under President Josip Tito. Much was written about the Yugoslav experience and much of this commentary was intensely partisan. Advocates tended to contrast the comparative successes and openness of Yugoslavia with countries more fully within the Soviet sphere of influence; critics tended to contrast its limited economic success and political freedoms with the societies to its west. Yugoslavia in this period undoubtedly represented a real experiment in some sort of workers' self-management, but this collapsed along with the state of Yugoslavia at the end of the 1980s.

The “New” Market Socialism: The 1980s and Beyond

The ideas of market socialism were revived and reassessed under quite different circumstances in Western Europe and North America in the 1980s and 1990s. The context here was the ascendancy of a newly assertive market capitalism, personified in the political regimes of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, and a corresponding loss of faith in the models of social democracy that had dominated the mainstream left since 1945. After 1945, the reformist left in Western Europe (and beyond) had come very widely to endorse a social democratic political program. In essence, this

meant retaining a broadly capitalist market economy but moderating its outcomes (both social and economic) by an active economic role for the state, above all through the support of full employment, progressive taxation, and an expansive welfare state. This was the era and strategy of the Keynesian welfare state (KWS). The ascendant New Right, or neo-liberalism, insisted on a politics of less state and more (capitalist) market. There was a view among some on the left, not only that this pushed social democratic parties rightwards but that actually the whole social democratic reform strategy (taking the capitalist market economy much as it was but seeking to achieve social change through redistributing its product) no longer worked. Since the Soviet Union had very long since ceased to offer an attractive alternative (and in 1991, ceased to exist altogether), there was a quest to find an alternative that retained and enhanced the advantages of living in an affluent liberal democracy but with a more democratic and equitable economy. For some, at least, the answer was a form of market socialism.

At the heart of this new model of market socialism was the abolition of large-scale private ownership of capital and its replacement by some form of “social ownership.” There was considerable variation in what this “social ownership” might look like. One of the key advocates of reform was the economist and expert on the Soviet economy Alec Nove, who identified three possible models: an economy built around (1) centralized state corporations, (2) socialized enterprises (socially owned but not centrally directed) or (3) workers’ co-operatives. Although Nove tended to prefer the first of these options, most market socialists were drawn towards the more decentralized, co-operative form. Although the precise institutional form varied, the general sense was that groups of workers might use capital and would derive their incomes from their deployment of it, but would not be the owners of that capital which would remain, in the last instance and in some way, collectively owned by society. The aspiration seems to be that labor should be the sole source of *earned* income (although there were and are other criteria according to which society may want to provide income to its citizens). One shorthand way of describing this relationship is that in a market socialist economy, labor hires capital rather than capital hiring labor (though there are economists who insist that these two are materially the same thing). Most market socialists retained some place for the private

ownership of capital (they all allow of the private ownership of non-capital goods) as the price of innovation and perhaps of personal liberty. However, they sought to distinguish between a (perhaps generous) reward for the scarce skill of the genuine entrepreneur and the rents claimed by those who brought nothing to the productive process but their ownership of the scarce resource, capital.

Given the preference for the worker co-operative form, much attention in the recent market socialist literature is devoted to the question of enterprise structure and governance. How are workers' cooperatives to be formed and (more problematically) shut down? Who will take day-to-day managerial decisions? How is authority to be exercised within the workplace? Can there be differential wages (for skill and effort)? Must workers make some financial commitment to their enterprise? Can they withdraw value when they leave? May a co-operative employ additional workers who are not part of the co-op itself? There is a widespread suspicion among mainstream economists that the perverse incentives set up by workers' co-operatives mean that they will tend to underinvest, fail to take up new market opportunities, restrict the expansion of employment, and dissipate the enterprise's working capital. In the real world of co-operatives, there is some evidence that workers in co-ops actually self-exploit (paying themselves low wages and working long hours).

There is an extensive literature that seeks to address these supposed weaknesses of a labor-managed economy—some of it is theoretical, some of it based upon the experience of co-operative enterprises, including successful experience in the plywood industry of the north-western U.S., in the “third economy” of northern Italy and perhaps above all, in the Mondragon complex of associated co-operatives based in the Basque region of Spain and employing in excess of 80,000 people in 2010. Supporters of market socialism argue that this lived experience shows that some of the “theoretical” problems associated with a labor-managed economy can be overcome—that workers do succeed in appointing managers who are able to manage, that co-operators can be given incentives that will prevent them from dissipating all the capital in an enterprise, and that the issue of “insiders” and “outsiders” can be overcome. They suggest that labor-managed enterprises may have alternatives to capitalist labor markets which

divide the population into the “employed but over-worked” and those with no paid work at all. Skeptics doubt that any of these solutions could be extended into a generally labor-managed economy and are, in some sense, parasitic upon a wider (and capitalistic) market economy.

Prospects

The immediate prospects for a market socialist future look unpromising. While one of the great attractions of market socialism has been its supposed feasibility, it is actually hard to see how an incremental path to market socialism could be established. (Its social democratic forerunner, however unsuccessful some have judged it to be, at least had an account of how incremental progress might be made.) What makes market socialism “work” is a very radical (and radically underdeveloped) position on questions of social ownership (i.e., the large-scale socialization of private capital) and it is very hard to see where the political support for this is to be found at present. On the other hand, in a world of intensifying inequality, under-employment, and the unsustainable exploitation of finite resources, market socialism may yet find that its time will come.

Chris Pierson

See also [Communism](#), [Varieties of](#), [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Socialism](#); [State](#), [Theories of the](#)

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Marx, Karl

Karl Marx (1818–83) has been a notable figure in modern political thought in three distinct ways. From the 1880s to the 1980s, he was the eponymous icon of Marxism, a collection of political and philosophical doctrines derived from some of his works by commentators and politicians. These ideas were characteristically expressed in dogmatic terms such as scientific socialism, materialist conception of history, dialectical materialism, and the dictatorship of the proletariat. In modern political thought, Marxism was initially and mainly treated as constitutive of wide-ranging and transformative political struggles in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such as anticapitalist party politics and conspiratorial activity in the West, the Russian and Chinese revolutions in the East, and national liberation movements and Cold War conflicts worldwide.

In the course of the 1950s and 1960s, however, an alternative “humanist” Marx was constructed by philosophers. This was done largely from manuscripts first published in the 1930s in German, and not widely circulated and translated till the post–World War II period. This was Marx before Marxism, or at any rate a Marx in considerable tension with the deterministic science and philosophical materialism on which Marxism had been based. The humanist Marx was said to espouse a “praxis” philosophy arguing a unity of theory and practice, a theory of alienation of the worker from his [sic] productive capacities and his “species-being,” or human essence, a view of the proletarian or working-class person as the universal human subject, and a vision of a revolution that would transform human

social and economic relationships. Within this context, there were notable academic debates on human nature, justice, morality, rights, democracy, gender or “the woman question,” and the human self in relation to property and labor. These are all core concepts in modern political thought to which Marx was made to speak, so in that way he became a political thinker in the current canon.

There is also another, “analytical” Marx, constructed in the 1970s and 1980s almost entirely from a short work (Preface to “A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy”) that was little known until the twentieth century. The terms of this text—modes, means, forces, and relations of production; property relations; economic structure; real foundation; superstructure; social consciousness; social existence; social formation; as well as development, conflict, “fettering,” and transformation—were meticulously examined and reconstructed in accordance with logical and empirical notions of clarity and rigor current at the time. This Marx was adopted into, but ultimately expelled from, a positivist version of philosophy and social science.

There are thus three versions of Marx of relevance to modern political thought. One is the man who gave his name (perhaps inadvertently, and certainly posthumously) to the major transformative movement in twentieth-century global politics. Another is the man whose early writings inspired commentaries that are now reference points in political philosophy. And the third is the analytical social theorist who linked politics to economics, and economics to technology, albeit unsuccessfully. Ironically the basic concepts that Marx himself noted as his special contribution to critical thinking about human society all derive from a single concept, *class*. However, he never defined this term precisely, and it has been absorbed into modern social thought most centrally in sociology. Overall, Marx’s contribution to modern political thought has been to change the terms through which any credible discussion of politics must take place.

Early Life, Times, and Politics

The facts and narrative constituting Marx’s biography have emerged in relation to the contrasting receptions of his work that have taken place over

time. With the increase in Marx's fame and notoriety since his death, the amount of biographical material has gradually increased. Marx's works, published and unpublished, were almost all obscure in his lifetime, soon out of print, and not easily available. The first widely circulated work to establish a Marx tradition, by producing and publicizing a political and biographical narrative, was the 1872 second edition of the *Communist Manifesto*. A contextualized rather than traditional account of Marx's life, times, and politics reveals that he and his works are problematic today in challenging ways. Marx was born into a Jewish family in Trier in the German Rhineland, an area where constitutional rule and religious toleration were introduced during the Napoleonic occupation of 1806–13. During the conservative reaction that followed, the locality was absorbed into the Kingdom of Prussia, and in 1824, Marx's father converted to Lutheranism in a Catholic area to preserve his living as a lawyer. Karl grew up in a family circle and "alternative" intellectual culture in which the free-thinking values of the Enlightenment were cultivated. This atmosphere involved the use of philosophy and science to establish universal truths relevant to society and politics, and an immediately skeptical attitude toward the commonplace certainties of doctrinal Christianity and political authoritarianism. In the German monarchies and principalities of the day, church and state, Christianity and morality, were decidedly unseparated. From the point of view of the authorities, radical and foreign (i.e., French, English, and American) views linking the legitimacy of the state to the will of the people were suspect to the point of sedition.

After a classical education (including considerable compulsory study of the Bible and Christian dogma), the young Marx was sent off in 1835 at the age of 17 to the University of Bonn to study law and follow his father into the professional classes. At the time, the universities represented an area of limited state toleration for critical views, excluding the twin extremes of atheism and liberalism, both of which were associated with the violence of the French Revolution (1789–99). At Bonn, Marx was little interested in legal training, involving himself instead in student scrapes. He was transferred by his father to the University of Berlin in 1836 to complete his degree. At both universities, the younger Marx fell in with student radicals, who—under the guise of philosophical debate—were subjecting the

authoritarian political structures and quasi-medieval economic arrangements of the German states to scornful skepticism.

In the mid-1830s and early 1840s, Christianity itself, and by implication the legitimacy of the state, had come under scandalous attack in scholarly works on the question of the historical Jesus and the nature of religion. Although the works themselves were not openly atheistic, they alarmed the authorities, who suspected that radicals would draw treasonous conclusions. Even though Marx was not the author of such works, nor yet persecuted for his political opinions and religious skepticism, and although he submitted a dissertation (on Greek philosophy) to the University of Jena by post and so obtained a PhD in 1841, he concluded that he would not be in line for an academic appointment. In any case, he had probably become more interested in involving himself in the politics of thorough-going liberal, but legal, reform.

In a short-lived concession to liberal opinion, the Prussian monarchy tolerated—for a brief time between 1842 and 1843—the publication of newspapers that could report critically on local issues. One of these was the *Rhenish Gazette* in the German city of Cologne. Marx attached himself to it as a writer, and he was eventually—briefly—its last editor. The paper was supported by business interests favoring the modernization of the medieval property system, reform of the laws of contract and incorporation, and liberalization of entry into the professions and trades. Traditional restrictive practices would be dismantled in favor of the free-market relations that these businessmen admired in Britain and France. Moreover they also proposed, albeit timidly, the modernization of the political structures that allocated power to hereditary and other elites, including religious hierarchies. In opposition to this political establishment, they advocated more representation and participation in government by middle-class people like themselves. Marx took up this liberalizing line with enthusiasm. However, he overtly sympathized with workers who were on the laboring side of modern commercial relations, taking his cue from personal contacts with communist radicals and the socialist literature of the day, which was predominantly French.

The Prussian government made the position of the *Rhenish Gazette* untenable in 1843 (the Tsar of Russia had complained to the King about its dangerous liberalism), so Marx withdrew to his study (as he put it later himself) to consider “the social question,” as it was known at the time. The most notable German authority on the subject was the iconic philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831), whose *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* (1821) was a widely read compendium of modern wisdom on the individual, the family, ethics, politics, economic activities, authority relations, and governmental structures. Although Hegel was deliberately ambiguous and oblique in his writing, the very activity of making philosophy engage at the highest level with these historical and contemporary topics was itself controversial. Also controversial was his refusal to reproduce Christian teachings and moral truths verbatim, and his developmental view that progress comes with an unfolding of the human potential, not from God’s will as such.

Marx took Hegel’s ambiguous conservatism for granted, but like other Young Hegelians, he focused instead on the great philosopher’s subversive potential in opening up contemporary government, the economy, and politics more generally to independent analysis. In particular, Hegel had imported French and Scottish work on civil society and political economy into his scheme, and Marx undertook a critical examination of Hegel’s account in relation to Marx’s own communist views on the centrality of social class in human experience. Only a small fraction of these early manuscript works found their way into print at the time, and as with virtually all Marx’s works throughout his life, they achieved for the most part only the limited readership of German-language radical groups.

After the demise of the *Rhenish Gazette*, the newly married Marx joined other German radicals in 1844 in an emigration to Paris, where they could write and publish more freely, but with a view to clandestine circulation of these materials in the German states and principalities. Marx was soon expelled by the French authorities as a foreign subversive, and with his associates, he moved to Brussels in Belgium in early 1845. The political strategy was twofold: the socialists and communists (the two terms were not at all distinct at the time) worked with middle-class liberals and commercial interests. These reformers were promoting government that would be more

representative of, and more responsible to, the people, meaning only the propertied (male) citizenry. But the radicals also worked against the liberals, promoting the interests of nonpropertied, low-income laborers, particularly the urban poor—among them many German immigrants—who were subject to casual exploitation and frequent unemployment. In keeping with this politics of intellectual emigration and worker migration, Marx and Engels joined an international League of Communists, which linked up disparate groups from various countries. The two secured a commission at their London conference in November–December 1847 to draft a manifesto. The German-language document appeared there in a small printing in early 1848, with plans for immediate shipment to German networks and translations into major languages.

The *Communist Manifesto*

This short, popular work was first published anonymously in 1848 at an expatriate German press in London. Written in conjunction with his lifelong friend (from 1844) and sometime collaborator Friedrich Engels (1820–95), the *Communist Manifesto* is still the best introduction to Marx's political thought. The reader should note, however, that the work is organized around the historical existence of classes and class struggle, and the contemporary politics of fighting for a classless society. Marxist concepts such as materialism, dialectic, scientific socialism, ideology, alienation, species-being, mode of production, social formation, and the like do not appear in the *Manifesto*. These concepts, which are the constituents of later exegesis and popularization, have developed importance over time as Marx's work has been received by commentators and politicians. They are often used as framing devices and organizational signposts, but the extent to which they add to or detract from Marx's message in major works, such as the *Communist Manifesto*, is open to debate.

In terms of modern political thought, the *Communist Manifesto* is a remarkable document, offering—in lively and accessible language—a reconceptualization of human history as the history of class struggles, rather than a history of dynasties and empires, or a moralizing and prophetic account of the relationship between God and humans. Here class is defined in relation to the everyday activities of production and consumption

common to all societies. Hitherto class had been of little interest to historians, other than as a timeless and largely unremarkable backdrop of rich and poor. The text focuses on the commercial classes or bourgeoisie in Europe, explaining their development from petty traders and urban guildsmen in terms of two factors: an increase in demand caused by wealth derived from conquest or trade in the Americas and Asia, and the use of new technologies in Europe to produce large volumes of goods efficiently in response to this influx. The globalization of trade and market-driven innovation in manufacture, so the authors argue, will transform all nations, cultures, and peoples of the world, and at an ever increasing pace. Traditional ways of life, including political structures, will be relentlessly destroyed, and the replacement will be the modern representative state, like the parliamentary systems in Britain and France. This kind of government is merely a committee, so Marx and Engels say, for administering the common affairs of the bourgeoisie, claims to popular sovereignty notwithstanding.

For Marx and Engels, this vast and ongoing bourgeois revolution has two consequences. Increasing inequalities of wealth and power will simplify class structures down to a diametrically opposed bourgeoisie and proletariat; and market-driven allocations of productive resources and therefore wages and salaries will become increasingly volatile and crisis-prone, causing bitter class warfare. As the claims of bourgeois liberals are revealed to be hypocritical and impossible to fulfill for the population generally, the proletarian political movement will rise in numbers and thus represent the interests of the vast majority. National struggles and victories will coalesce into an egalitarian international transformation in economic and political life.

After this sweeping prologue, Marx and Engels zero in on their target audience—low-paid urban workers in modernizing economies—by explaining how exactly the current system of property relations establishes and supports capital. Through these relations the bourgeoisie owns the essential means of production, such as factories and raw materials. Workers, by contrast, lack access to employment, except through the wage contract, so they must compete among themselves for jobs. This competition drives wages down and condemns them to misery. The authors dismiss claims that

these exchanges between proletarians and capitalists are free and fair, as bourgeois interests profess, and argue instead that the property system itself makes what are in reality *social* resources—factories and raw materials—into *private* ones. Marx and Engels thus condemn the capitalist economic system as exploitative in principle and in practice.

According to the *Communist Manifesto*, communists are merely workers—and sometimes a few intellectuals of bourgeois background—who understand these truths, and who help to form the proletariat into a political class. Their goal is the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the seizure of political power. Proletarian victory will result not in the renewed domination of one class by another but in the abolition of class divisions as such. In such a classless society, political power will no longer be synonymous with the power of one class to oppress another. Rather, society will become an association in which the free development of each underpins the free development of all. In terms of political thought, this vision is clearly a version of the “good society,” calling for the transformation and transcendence of the modern state and property system. However, the text offers few details on how this change would work out in practice.

The *Communist Manifesto* offers two theses of immense importance in the history of modern political thought. One is the stated general view that ideas, culture, social institutions, religions, morals, laws, and political systems have always been formed throughout history in a determinate relationship with economic ownership, practices, and technologies. Marx and Engels comment that the ruling ideas of any age are the ideas of the ruling class. The other thesis is the more historically specific claim that crucial changes in the political configuration of medieval societies arise when improvements in the means of production—and the ambitions of the rising class in control of these forces—cannot be contained within feudal forms of property and law. Medieval authoritarianism is thus subject to overthrow by the modern state, as had already happened in France. The process would continue elsewhere in Europe and on a global scale. Similarly the two authors predict that further revolutions in the technologies and efficiencies of capitalist production will inevitably breach the confines of a legal system that makes social resources into private ones. Capitalist

property relations guarantee the economic and political power of commercial interests at the expense of the working classes. Hence, the *Communist Manifesto* predicts the overthrow of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat—or their common ruin.

Later Life, Hard Times, and Exile

The events of the revolutions of 1848 overtook the communists. Their document played no great part in the liberalizing struggles of the time, although Marx and Engels did, to a limited extent. The two worked on a successor newspaper in Cologne, the *New Rhenish Gazette*, which pursued the twofold political line outlined above. Marx made public speeches, and Engels was briefly involved in an armed retreat of liberal revolutionary forces from the German states into Switzerland. In 1850, he joined the Marx family in another emigration, this time to London, and—as it turned out—for the length of both their lives. Engels worked at the English premises in Manchester of the familial firm of cotton-spinners and merchants, supporting the Marx family through hard times. These included the deaths of two little boys and a girl, and the upbringing of the surviving three daughters. Life in England was safe enough, but Marx and his wife suffered the damaging effects of poverty, dying in their 60s after years of poor health.

As an émigré and disillusioned '48-er, Marx's political activities were limited to his familiar pattern of critical agitation and polemic, pamphleteering and letter-writing. In 1864, he helped to found the International Working Men's Association, later known as the "First International," in London. This was an umbrella organization linking socialist and communist groups, networks, and eventually political parties in Europe and the Americas. Principally, however, Marx was devoting himself to a vast lifetime project—a comprehensive critique of political economy, the economics of his day. To do so, he read widely the standard authors on the subject, such as Adam Smith and David Ricardo, tackling many English-language texts and sources. He struggled to resolve commonplace claims that wage contracts between members of the bourgeois and proletarian classes were an exchange between equals in the marketplace, and that profits were fairly and justly derived by capitalists as

a result. Marx was convinced that he could show empirically that wages tended toward subsistence and that they were in any case subject to sharp practices that were difficult to control, even when legislation and a factory inspectorate were in place.

However, Marx's more ambitious aim was theoretical. He attempted a resolution of the problem of profit: Out of an exchange in which the laborer received as wages the full value of his labor, how then could a profit for the capitalist arise? Either it would have to be a deduction from the value of the labor performed to make the product, or it would have to be some mysterious increase in value arising in the economic process as a whole. Over the next two decades, Marx worked himself tirelessly to draft this comprehensive critique and to get it published, circulated, and translated. His masterwork was *Capital*, vol. 1, published in 1867, with further posthumous volumes and supplements edited from his voluminous manuscripts.

This study was clearly an expansion of the outlook sketched so brilliantly in the *Communist Manifesto*. *Capital*, however, is more focused on the economic theorizing through which the class positions of bourgeois and proletarian are fundamentally defined and politically practiced. It is less obviously concerned with the global sweep of capitalist development and imperialist politics; a planned volume on the world market never materialized, even in manuscript. Although Marx was pleased with his solution to the problem of profit—known as the theory of surplus value—and with his rigorously defined concept of exploitation, these particular conceptualizations have not figured significantly in modern political thought.

Marx and Modern Political Thought

Within modern political thought, an “analytical” school of the 1970s and 1980s focused attention on Marx's short preface to “A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy,” published in 1859 as a first installment on *Capital*. These Marx scholars viewed the language of the 1859 preface as unusually concise and rigorous. Their analytical school created a Marx

whose work could be tested within the empirical frameworks of mid-twentieth-century social science and historical studies.

Consisting of a brief account of Marx's life and studies to date, and a compressed summary of the general conclusion that guided him, the 1859 "Preface" asserts that political conflicts are rooted in economic circumstances but fought out in terms of ideologies, including religious, artistic, and philosophical forms of social consciousness. It also specifies Asiatic, ancient, feudal, and modern bourgeois modes of production as progressive epochs in the development of society. However, class as an analytical category and class struggle as an overt political perspective were omitted, doubtless because that kind of discussion would have attracted attention from the censors. Similarly the tensions between technological developments and legal systems—whether early modern industry with feudal legal systems or highly productive manufacture with capitalist private property—were expressed in abstract, schematic formulations. The resolution of these somewhat veiled antagonisms was said by Marx to mark the close of human prehistory rather than worldwide proletarian revolution as a specific and stated goal.

These few lines in the 1859 "Preface"—linking social relations of production, material productive forces, the economic structure of society, its legal and political superstructure, and social consciousness in specific forms—reproduce to some extent the more provocative, uncensored formulations of the *Communist Manifesto*. However, they are probably self-censored rather than deliberately rigorous. Ultimately the analytical school found Marx's propositions wanting in relation to the methodological and evidential standards they had adopted from social science and a similar positivism in philosophy.

Although the history of Marxism has been one of successive ideological codifications, beginning with Engels's highly influential polemical works of the later 1870s, both Marxists (in manifold variant versions of "the doctrine") and anti-Marxists have shared common presumptions as to what Marxism actually is. Typically this has involved schematic accounts of scientific materialism, Hegelian dialectics, and historically successive modes of production. More recent approaches to Marx within modern

political thought, based on more sophisticated textual knowledge and analytical methodologies, take a skeptical view of traditional dogmatics and promote a more open-minded and constructive approach to the full range of his voluminous writings.

Overall Marx has shaped modern political thought decisively by resetting the terms for any inquiry into politics. He does so by laying out large-scale claims concerning the nature of power and authority in human communities, the way in which these structures have changed, the way that history up to his own time had recorded those changes, and the directionality that, so he argued, can be discerned in these developments. In modern political thought, there has been for many years no escape from the view that the interaction between political structures and economic activities—however that interaction is conceived—must occupy a central place in any discussion of politics.

Terrell Carver

See also [Communism, Varieties of](#); [Dictatorship of the Proletariat](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Empire and Political Thought](#); [Engels, Friedrich](#); [Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Mass Society

Mass society

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Mass Society

Surveying the new workforce crowded into the factories, offices, and cheap housing in the rapidly expanding urban centers of industrial capitalism, mid-nineteenth-century observers were struck by the unprecedented density of population. Some followed Karl Marx in identifying a new class structure. Others saw only an undifferentiated “mass” and a social order increasingly built around the interests, opinions, and tastes of the majority. Responses to this emerging “mass society” were sharply divided between those who lamented the passing of the old hierarchical order and those who welcomed the construction of a more egalitarian and democratic society. Both identified a central fault line running between the masses and the social and intellectual elites.

Aristocratic and conservative commentators saw themselves battered on all sides by the emergence of mass markets in cultural expression and political loyalty. For them, the mass was an unashamedly destructive force, tearing down the citadels of hereditary and expert privilege and imposing mediocrity. They drew a fundamental moral distinction between the noble and the common. Friedrich Nietzsche, writing in 1888, did not doubt that by marginalizing the old spiritual elites, the onward march of the “great majority” of “mediocre ones” was undermining the moral integrity of society. This argument was forcefully restated by José Ortega y Gasset in *The Revolt of the Masses* (1930). Defining nobility as a personal disposition “synonymous with excelling oneself” rather than a social status, he cast the mass as its implacable enemy, crushing “everything that is different,

qualified and select” and settling for “the stock of commonplaces, prejudices, fag-ends of ideas” (ch. VIII). This assumed leveling down was felt particularly acutely by those writers and literary critics who appointed themselves custodians of cultural tradition and “informed and cultivated judgments.” *Mass Civilisation and Minority Culture* (1930), the attack on bestsellers and commercialized cultural production launched by the English critic F. R. Leavis, adroitly expressed their anger and regret.

For other observers, including anxious liberals, it was the new political marketplace that prompted most concern. Although he supported the extension of the franchise, England’s most passionate defender of personal liberty, John Stuart Mill, cautioned in *On Liberty* (1859) that in appealing to voters by ventriloquizing popular feeling, elected politicians were replacing the old tyranny of autocratic rule with a new “tyranny of prevailing opinion” that actively suppressed the individuality and dissent essential to democratic debate, self-realization, and the advancement of society.

In contrast, other democratic observers saw the “mass” as the target of power, not its agent. Uprooted from the social and moral solidities of village life and cast adrift in the capitalist marketplace and the anonymous city, members of the new mass appeared highly vulnerable to appeals from demagogues and dictators who played on their frustrations and hopes. This concern was supported by commentary on collective behavior that characterized the mass as a collection of isolated, rootless individuals, a psychological crowd, all too readily influenced by the suggestions carried by vivid imagery and stirring speeches. The experience of mass mobilization for World War I seemed to confirm this analysis and to underline the persuasive power of the proliferating mass media. Democrats’ worst fears were confirmed by the rise of Fascism and Nazism in Europe in the 1930s and Hitler’s concerted orchestration of popular spectacle and propaganda.

The Allied victory in World War II did not entirely allay these fears. On the contrary, a number of democratic commentators saw the postwar United States as a new kind of mass society. They pointed to the concentration of power at the top, the seductiveness of the new medium of television, the social isolation of the suburbs and the automobile, and the erosion of

citizenship as the immediate democracy of consumption and the shopping mall successfully challenged the attenuated democracy of the ballot box. These concerns were distilled in the titles of two influential books of the time, David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* (1953) and C. Wright Mills's *The Power Elite* (1956).

However, in the 1950s, with the resurgence of the Civil Rights Movement, the mobilization against the war in Vietnam, and the growing demands for gender equality and sexual rights, this image of a compliant mass became less credible. At the same time, communication research was dismantling theories of powerful and direct media effects and reconstructing audiences as active, selective, and sometimes resistant. As a consequence, over the past three decades, the portrayal of capitalist democracies as mass societies has moved from being an active conceptualization to becoming an episode in the history of ideas.

Graham Murdock

See also [Alienation](#); [Carlyle, Thomas](#); [Conservatism](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Mill, John Stuart](#); [Nietzsche, Friedrich](#); [Political Sociology](#); [Progress](#)

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Christopher J.H. Duggan Christopher J.H. Duggan

Mazzini, Giuseppe

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Mazzini, Giuseppe

The principal ideologue of Italian unification, a leading exponent of democratic nationalism, and an influential social thinker, Giuseppe Mazzini (1805–72) was born into a respectable middle-class family in Genoa, a few weeks after the incorporation of the city into the French empire of Napoleon Bonaparte. As a young man, he was heavily influenced by Romantic thought, and throughout his life, he never lost his belief that faith and passion were essential to political action. A turning point in his life, he later claimed, came in 1821, when he encountered Italian patriots leaving Genoa for exile after a failed patriotic rising in Piedmont: From that moment, he vowed to dedicate himself totally to the cause of Italian freedom.

After graduating in law in 1827, Mazzini joined the secret society of the *Carbonari*, and he was arrested and imprisoned for conspiring to bring down the monarchy of Piedmont-Sardinia. He went into exile and spent periods in France and Switzerland before moving in 1837 to London, where he was to live for most of the remainder of his life. In 1831, while in Marseilles, he set up Young Italy, a political movement that sought far more explicitly than earlier secret societies to work for Italian unity and the education of the masses. Education—understood principally in terms of the moral elevation of “the people”—remained an abiding concern, and much of his huge output of letters, pamphlets, and essays was geared to raising public consciousness, especially in relation to the principle of national independence and freedom.

Mazzini's views on nations and nationality were formed early and hardly changed throughout his life. He believed God (and religion was central to his political vision) operated through peoples and that it was the particular duty of Italians in the nineteenth century to work for the unity of their country and spearhead a new European order of free nations. Mazzini never offered any rigorous definition of a nation: He preferred instead to point to "indicators" such as shared language, history, and customs. Italy's particular "mission" (one of his key concepts) was linked to his idea of Rome's universal role: The "third Rome" (after that of the Caesars and the papacy) would be the Rome of the people. The implementation of the national principle would further the progress of humanity and lead ultimately, he maintained, to universal peace. Although a convinced republican, Mazzini did not specify a preferred constitutional arrangement: What was crucial was that it was sustained by the will of the people.

Mazzini worked tirelessly from his base in London to promote the cause of Italian unity, build up networks of supporters, and encourage popular insurrections. He harbored a religious conception of political action: Risings might fail, but in demonstrating faith and conviction, they could win support for the cause. His stress on duty, the moral improvement of the working classes, and his opposition to socialist ideas of class conflict made him an influential figure in British radical circles in the 1840s and 1850s. In 1849, he returned to Italy, and he won many plaudits for his leadership of the Roman Republic. After the collapse of the Republic, he spent time in France and Switzerland before returning again to London.

The failure of the revolutions in Italy in 1848–49 marked the beginning of a steep decline in Mazzini's influence. His dogmatic character and rigid insistence on republicanism and popular insurrection alienated numerous supporters. His disastrous attempt at an insurrection in Milan early in 1853 was for many the last straw. Italian patriots now looked increasingly to Piedmont, under the progressive liberal leadership of Count Cavour, and to diplomacy rather than to revolution, as the best means of achieving Italian independence and unity.

Mazzini played only a peripheral role in the events that led to the unification of Italy in 1859–60. He was deeply despondent about the

political outcome, seeing the new Kingdom of Italy more as an imposed extension of Piedmontese power than an expression of the will of the Italian people. During the 1860s, he continued to work from London to promote republicanism and urge the seizure of Rome and completion of Italian unity. However, his influence within Italy was limited, and by the time of his death in 1872, he had become a largely isolated figure. His virulent opposition to socialism had also left him increasingly marginalized in working-class politics.

Although his career was in many respects one of failure, Mazzini's passionate commitment to democratic nationalism and the moral elevation of the masses made him an inspirational figure for many national movements in the twentieth century.

Christopher J.H. Duggan

See also [Garibaldi, Giuseppe](#); [Italian Political Thought](#); [Nationalism](#); [Radicalism](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Republicanism](#); [Saint-Simon, Henri de](#)

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Merleau-Ponty, Maurice

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Merleau-Ponty, Maurice

Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908–61) belonged to a generation of radical thinkers that emerged from France's experience of World War II. His philosophy covers a huge range of interests, from the scientific theory of relativity to aesthetics. It includes many essays as well as two books—*Humanism and Terror* (1947) and *Adventures of the Dialectic* (1955)—on politics. His principal aim in all these studies was to reveal the world's contingency and to show that claims to ultimate truth not only rely on untenable assumptions but also result in closed systems of thought that block the rich, complex emergence of existence. He argued that such closure is intrinsically aligned with an impoverishment or neglect of lived experience and, in politics especially, with violence. In this sense, all his work can be seen as having a political orientation insofar as its account of co-existence—as a hazardous process of negotiation with no guarantee of a happy outcome—challenges modern rationalism and its understanding of the political. The exemplary thinker from this perspective is Niccolò Machiavelli, whom Merleau-Ponty thought was more attuned to the messy, strategic nature of political life than, say, a moralist like Immanuel Kant.

Merleau-Ponty was influenced by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Karl Marx, drawing in particular on their youthful writings. He also engaged throughout his career with the founders of phenomenology, Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, earning himself the accolade of being the greatest French phenomenologist. What attracted him was a mode of interrogation that strives to return to the lifeworld: that realm where

embodied experience emerges prior to its thematization in rational concepts. From this perspective, he could question underlying presuppositions that underpin scientific or philosophical concepts, while insisting that these remain anchored in and engendered by nonrational experience. From Heidegger, he took the view that we are thrown into the world and respond to it practically before we think about it rationally. Indeed, Merleau-Ponty's entire philosophy rests on his phenomenological premise of the primacy of perception. It is from the practical responses of the body to its situation that corporeally significant meaning first emerges, and if this lived experience is subsequently overwritten by reason, the ambiguities inherent in life are never adequately confronted. This position has far-reaching consequences for our understanding of the political and for the practice of politics.

Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology is inseparable from his existentialism. Together with Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir (Merleau-Ponty and Sartre were political co-editors of the existentialist journal *Les Temps Modernes* until a famous quarrel in the mid-1950s), Merleau-Ponty wrote under the banner of the existentialist movement, sharing his colleagues' project of formulating a humanist Marxism attuned to problems of commitment, freedom, and consciousness as well as to social and economic change. Although he later proclaimed the movement dead, he continued to theorize from the perspective of lived experience: In his later work, Merleau-Ponty struggled to describe the ontology of existence from a post-humanist perspective, endowing it with the distinctive label of Flesh.

Merleau-Ponty commented extensively on political developments during the 1940s and '50s, practicing the sort of critical analysis he associated with the engaged intellectual. In particular, he refused the either/or politics of the Cold War, arguing that France should refuse to take sides in a conflict that had been reduced to two crudely opposed ideologies, both of which he charged with being ignorant of the complexities and ambiguities of the political and prone, as a consequence, to excessive violence, even terror. Rather than condemning political regimes on the basis of their ideological self-presentation, his existentialism required an ongoing interrogation of the relationships and modes of existence they actually afford. It is from this perspective that he judged both liberal capitalism and Soviet communism wanting, while recognizing both as unfinished social projects requiring

continuous reflection and, inasmuch as they closed themselves to self-criticism, critique. Similarly, in his own political sympathies, Merleau-Ponty kept his distance from any particular cause or political party. Although he moved from hesitant support for European communism to provisional support for the parliamentary left, he judged the French political system to be anachronistic and its elite bankrupt, especially as its enduring colonial ambitions were exemplified by the war in Algeria.

Diana Coole

See also [French Political Thought](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Postmodernism and Political Theory](#).

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Methodology of Political Thought

Methodology of political thought

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Methodology of Political Thought

It is hard to draw a clear demarcation between *political thought* and *political ideology*, *philosophy*, or *theory*, all familiar concepts from practical politics as well as the academy. Thus, the meaning of political thought has never been unequivocal, a fact that must be reflected in any assessment of its methodology. The issues that have arisen during the history of political thought can have their origin in academic debates, but just as often they have been initiated by real-life political events. Therefore, the methods of political thought should acknowledge the diversity of the subject matter, for it may be of consequence whether a text was first intended to be a philosophical treatise on politics, a pamphlet addressed to masses, or advice to a prince.

The word *methodology* is equally challenging in this context. Rather than giving a commonly agreed-to list of methods for solving the problems of political thought (for it hardly exists), this entry addresses different ways of approaching the subject area and getting a grasp of its problems. The degree of their fruitfulness is subject to individual preference as much as it is a product of cultural and historical circumstance. Where this variance has led to methodological disagreement, it should be understood as a reflection of what is genuinely “political” in political thought.

Methodology and the Emergence of Modern Political Theory

Political theory as a part of political science was established in European and American universities by the late nineteenth century. Despite substantial national variation, the disciplinary evolution of political science highlighted the need to study what today could be called the methodology of political thought.

During the establishment of modern political theory, the study of central political concepts and principles was usually understood as a continuation of the Western tradition of moral and political philosophy that dated back to classical antiquity. Within the tradition, the terms *philosophical* and *scientific* were generally interchangeable, especially before the social sciences separated from philosophy. The methods of political philosophy were influenced by other branches of philosophy/science, as exemplified by the relation between St. Augustine's theological philosophy and politics or Thomas Hobbes's political philosophy and contemporaneous geometry. In the area of politics, the philosophical/scientific canon consisted of texts written both by nonacademic observers and participants, such as Niccolò Machiavelli and John Locke, and professional philosophers, such as Immanuel Kant and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. The philosophers and social scientists of the nineteenth century often portrayed their own contributions as improvements or corrections of these earlier doctrines.

During the nineteenth century, political thought became closely associated with political ideology. This was connected to the birth of the immensely influential notion of modern mass politics, which presented the ideologies of the left and right as the organizing forces of politics. Thinkers such as John Stuart Mill and Karl Marx enjoyed a prominent role as individuals who could establish or demolish political principles (such as liberty or equality) with their capacity for theoretical (i.e., philosophical/scientific) reasoning. Political parties that associated with ideological "isms" were responsible for putting the principles into practice in parliamentary and sometimes revolutionary politics.

Finally, the nineteenth century produced important contributions to the theory of historical interpretation. These include the German hermeneutical tradition that started in the early nineteenth century with historical-critical interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, and the later controversies between scientific/philosophical and humanistic/historical studies of politics that were characteristic of many countries. The canons and traditions on which the study of political ideas was built became subject to increasing self-scrutiny, which is easily understood against the need of the relevant disciplines to understand why they had taken their particular shapes.

The Demand for Methodology

As long as the methodology of political thought has been debated, the issues have always been connected to the uses that are attributed to political thought. Thus, it is asked what the present students of political thought should *do* with ideas that were usually designed for some normative purpose and may continue to contain such relevance. We may, for example, examine political philosophy to locate its most rational and beneficial inventions and to educate future generations to implement them. Or we may be searching for a more cynical message that we suppose is written in between the lines to reveal the actual motives of individuals and states. Or we might want to develop a critical self-awareness toward the constantly evolving arsenal of ideas itself to understand better the preconditions of political debate. Or perhaps we are just pursuing the facts of a given historical event. All these options point toward different methodological choices and “styles” of studying political thought.

Throughout the history of modern political science, a major motive for the study of political thought has been to use it in the construction of institutions, communities, or attitudes. The history of political thought is closely connected to legal and constitutional thought, which helps explain its relevance in state- and nation-building. It has often been consulted about constitutionalism, parliamentarianism, or the allocation of political rights and responsibilities. This was the case especially during the period of democratic nation-building and social reform in Europe during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as with their contemporary

American “Ideas and Institutions” school that combined studies into the history of political thought with moral education.

Universal Principles Versus Evolutionary Knowledge

The methodology of the aforementioned studies is often openly present-oriented, for they take all political thought as material that speaks *pro et contra* present-day political solutions. Indeed, it has been argued that this method was for a long time the principal one for using past political ideas. According to the German conceptual historian Reinhart Koselleck, all historical periods were perceived as qualitatively similar until about the late eighteenth century, which made it permanently legitimate to address contemporary problems with solutions that were first proposed by thinkers of another period, often the venerable Greco-Roman era of classical antiquity.

The methods of historical sociology, as developed by German scholars such as Max Weber around the turn of the twentieth century, suggested a much different historical experience. They argued that modern European societies were particularistic, and that their uniqueness, as well as that of any other culture, could be explained only by studying the long evolution of their economic, political, and religious ideas and institutions. Simultaneously, the influence of such groundbreaking figures as Charles Darwin and Friedrich Nietzsche led many to doubt whether the presumably general principles of politics could withstand the test of time even nearly to the degree of the principles of engineering and physics—with even these being questioned after the predictive power of the general theory of relativity had been demonstrated.

The new problems were echoed in new evolutionary (sometimes pessimistic) philosophies of history and, regarding the methodology of the history of ideas, in the “logic of question and answer” developed by the British idealist philosopher R. G. Collingwood during the 1930s. Advancing arguably one of the most influential methodological ideas in the field, Collingwood stated that there are no perennial problems in philosophy

but only individual answers to individual questions. Therefore, even the problems that were labeled by philosophers as “fundamental” or “eternal” were no less subject to historical change than the various answers given to them at different times. Thus, the historian of ideas was required to ask, often against the weight of accepted interpretations, what the historically unique problem was that an idea was initially designed to answer.

This argument helps explain why the methodological problems encountered in political thought often take the shape of *anachronism*: Either one supposes that past thinkers meant something that they historically could not have meant or one approaches a present problem with a solution that is no longer applicable. The provocative conclusion drawn later by the British historian of political thought Quentin Skinner was that, as we live in a fundamentally changing world, every generation has to do their own political thinking for themselves, and that there can be no predescribed authoritative method of doing political philosophy or normative politics in general. To demand from the history of thought a solution to our immediate problems represents weak thinking or, worse, intent to mislead by false authority.

The Decline of the Philosophical Method

The traditional philosophical-historical approach suffered a further blow after World War II when political philosophy was associated with totalitarianism. Karl Popper became famous for his “personal war effort” in equating the ideologies of communism and National Socialism with the philosophies of Plato, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Hegel, and Marx in *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1945). Even if his conclusions were not always endorsed for their historical accuracy, general pessimism prevailed about the state of the discipline. In 1956, the Cambridge historian Peter Laslett announced his famous diagnosis of the at least momentary death of political philosophy, and in his 1959 book *What Is Political Philosophy?*, the Chicago political philosopher Leo Strauss stated that his subject had reached a state of decay and perhaps putrefaction.

Despite the similarity of wording, Laslett and Strauss were not confronting the same issues. Laslett concluded that recent developments in

epistemology and linguistic philosophy had made the traditional study of the “Great Books” an intellectual dead-end. Strauss, a German Jewish émigré who had worked in the United States since 1938, praised the “Great Books” for their permanent wisdom, but he feared that their message would be ignored in modern universities where the new “positivist” social sciences reigned, and political philosophy was studied merely for historical interest.

Contemporary Approaches to the Methodology of Political Thought

The crisis of political theorizing that coexisted with the postwar “end of ideology” took different shapes in different schools of thought. So did its solutions, which still have their effect on the work of political theorists. The “death” of traditional political philosophy proved to be premature, as evidenced by the activity of authors such as Strauss himself, Hannah Arendt, Sheldon Wolin, Isaiah Berlin, and their numerous followers. John Rawls’s *A Theory of Justice* (1971) was celebrated as the rebirth of political philosophy more than any other single work. Its introduction of two general “principles of justice” and their extensive philosophical justification rejuvenated a method that was familiar from the classic social-contract theories, which Rawls sought to reestablish on a firmer basis. Additionally, his methods were significantly influenced by the social sciences, most notably, social-choice theory. Rawls’s normative liberalism has been criticized by, among others, Alasdair MacIntyre and Charles Taylor, who argue that the methods of its justification—such as the “original position” and the “veil of ignorance”—are so detached from real-life communities and practices that they are virtually unusable. Indeed, a generation later (*Political Liberalism*, 1991), Rawls himself backed off from his substantive claims as unworkable, defaulting to a procedural conception of liberalism. Since the early 1980s, the debate between rights-focused “liberals” and duties-oriented “communitarians” has constituted the mainstream of Anglo-American normative political theorizing.

The developments in Cambridge led to the emergence of a new historicism in the study of political thought. In his studies on Locke, Laslett demonstrated that the *Two Treatises* were much more a “party-political

pamphlet” than Locke’s intended contribution to political philosophy. In particular, he demonstrated to the satisfaction of most scholars that the famous second treatise was written in 1679, in the thick of plotting by Locke and his patron the Earl of Shaftesbury to overthrow the monarchy, rather than a decade later, as a justification of the new order established after the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Laslett’s students Skinner and John Pocock argued that the standard philosophical interpretations of other classical texts similarly misconstrued their historical identity. The character of political thinking as historically situated activity, and political thinkers as historically situated individuals, had also been misunderstood.

The method they proposed to address these problems was careful historical research into the linguistic and political context surrounding political thinkers. With an adequate understanding of the context, the Cambridge historians claimed, it is possible to reconstruct the historical range of possibilities confronted by a thinker, and even the intention behind her text. The historian of political thought, in other words, should find out what a historical actor was doing in writing that text—taking part in academic debate, suppressing a rebellion, or something entirely different. With just that question adequately answered, the worst anachronistic interpretations would be repudiated and new historical insights revealed. The “Cambridge school’s” emphasis on language was influenced by the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein’s later writings, according to which language and social action are interconnected like the two sides of a coin.

Skinner’s historical interpretations, especially during the 1960s, were situation specific and emphasized the immediate intellectual surroundings of a thinker at the expense of more extensive “social forces” or “traditions of thought.” They can be contrasted with other approaches that also have paid attention to “context” but have defined it differently. During the 1960s, C. B. MacPherson provided an example of a new Marxist reading of the history of ideas, according to which modern political thought as epitomized by Hobbes and Locke was a reflection and justification of the modern capitalist mode of production that emerged in England during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. If the economy was the chief context of explanation for MacPherson, later critical and postmodernist theorists have looked for further ways of theorizing the effects on political thought of

power relations embedded in gender, culture, race, identity, or language. Regarding current practices in the field, the ideas of Michel Foucault, condensed in the expressions “genealogy of power” and “archaeology of knowledge,” have been highly influential. Conceptual history (*Begriffsgeschichte*), originally a German project, focuses on the historical transformation of central political concepts and the “semantic fields” around them, and it has been pursued in many countries and language areas.

A lasting discussion on the methodology of political thought is whether the field of political thought is at all approachable by “method.” Many historically minded scholars have simply recommended careful research combined with common sense and historical imagination as the best methodological choice. Whether we agree or not, it may be admitted that what goes as a variety of methodologies of political thought may perhaps be better described as more or less coherent compilations of philosophical ideas and rules of thumb that guide interpretation. Arguably, such ideas well applied can provide consistency to a selected way of research; for example, Mark Bevir has pursued this line and recently proposed a comprehensive “logic” of the history of ideas to address the central problems of the field on a philosophically sound basis. In some cases, methods work simply as precautions against mistakes, such as unintended anachronism. Hardly anyone would discourage the use of method in this sense. Furthermore, it is a plausible claim that all students of political thought apply some methods and rules in their reasoning and in assessing the validity of interpretations. Another question entirely is how conscious they are of these methods with their possible advantages and limitations.

Petri Koikkalainen

See also [Collingwood, Robin George](#); [Contract Theory](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Historicism](#); [Ideology](#); [Modernism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Political Science and Political Thought](#); [Political Sociology](#); [Rawls, John](#); [Strauss, Leo](#); [Totalitarianism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [Weber, Max](#)

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Francesco Tuccari Francesco Tuccari

Michels, Robert

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Michels, Robert

Robert Michels was born in Cologne on January 9, 1876, and died in Rome on May 2, 1936. Considered one of the most important social and political scientists of the nineteenth century, he still owes his fame to a single work, *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchic Tendencies of Modern Democracies*, which appeared in Germany in 1911 and which since then repeatedly has been published in the world's principal languages. His intellectual and political biography can be divided into five periods.

The first period stretches from 1876 to 1900. In these years, Michels lived in the gilded but severe world of his affluent bourgeois family, attending prestigious schools, taking up and then abandoning a military career, and carrying out university studies in Paris, Leipzig, Munich, and Halle.

Michels embraced socialism in 1900, breaking with his family and with his social background. This inaugurated the second part of his life, which lasted until 1907–08. In this period, he was active in European socialist parties across Germany, Italy, and France and, driven by a strong penchant for internationalism, came to approach progressively the tenets of revolutionary syndicalism. Furthermore, he cultivated an ever more intense scholarly vocation, establishing strong ties to Max Weber, Werner Sombart, and Gaetano Mosca. His faith in socialism barred him from embarking on an academic career in Germany, however, and he thus became an adjunct professor of political economy in Turin, Italy, in 1907.

He remained in Turin from 1907 to 1914. In this third period of his life, he abandoned political militancy in favor of research and university teaching. He thus distanced himself from his internationalism to join the causes of Italian nationalism and imperialism. And with the publication of the *Political Parties*, he became, alongside Mosca and Vilfredo Pareto, one of the principal theorists of elitism, leaving any democratic and socialist illusions behind. In 1913, finally, he applied for Italian citizenship, which he was granted only in 1921.

In 1913, Michels was called to Basel to take up a full professorship in political economy, and he remained there from 1914 to 1928. His pro-Italian position during World War I brought him to sever any links he still had with Germany. The Germanophile milieu in Basel also became openly hostile toward him. This hostility was further fueled by the sympathy that Michels began to foster for Italian fascism and for Mussolini. He was in personal contact with the latter already in 1923, trying also to legitimize the regime on the properly theoretical level.

Given this situation, Michels did everything he could to return to Italy and was finally called to teach at the University of Perugia in 1928. He spent the last period of his life teaching, researching, and, above all, propagandizing for the fascist regime abroad.

Michels wrote a great number of books and articles, particularly on patriotism and nationalism, on the history of socialism and Marxism, on sexual morals, on Italian imperialism, on the history of economic thought, and on the history of Italy and of Italian fascism. Nonetheless, it was his masterwork—the *Political Parties*—which ratified his fame as a political and social scientist internationally.

With this book, Michels proposed to analyze the internal structure of modern political parties so as to elucidate the tendencies that alternatively render democracies possible or impossible to uphold, not only within parties but also more generally in any organized social and political group, from the smallest communities all the way up to the state. To reach general conclusions, Michels decided to emphasize the analysis of those parties that seemed sensitive to the values of democracy because he considered them to be naturally inclined to the development of genuine democratic practices in

their internal organization. He thus decided to focus on socialist parties, in particular, on the German Social Democratic Party, that is, to the parties of which for years he had been a militant member.

The results of his work were extremely important. With his book, Michels was effectively able to elaborate an original sociological and political theory of the party. Simultaneously, he formulated the celebrated “iron law of oligarchy”; that is, the theorem that states the intrinsic unrealizability of democracy and the eternal dominion of organized minorities. He also gave a convincing explanation to the grave crisis experienced by the socialist parties of the Second International.

Because of all these elements, *Political Parties* immediately enjoyed an extraordinary influence that was definitively consolidated between the 1940s and the 1960s. Michels has since then been considered a “classic” in the scientific study of political parties and in the theory of elites, an exemplary critic of modern democratic theories, and one of the most significant exponents of nineteenth-century political realism.

Francesco Tuccari

See also [Democratic Theory](#); [Italian Political Thought](#); [Liberalism](#); [Mass Society](#); [Political Sociology](#); [Progress](#); [Representation](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Terence Ball Terence Ball

Mill, James

Mill, James

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Mill, James

James Mill (1773–1836) was born in Scotland, educated for the Presbyterian ministry, lost his faith, moved to London, and became an eminent political theorist, psychologist, educationist, economist, historian, and legal, political, and penal reformer. Influential and controversial in his lifetime, Mill is now all but forgotten. He is today remembered mainly as the dour and demanding father and teacher of his more famous son, John Stuart Mill, and as Jeremy Bentham's ally and collaborator on projects of penal and political reform. The younger Mill went on to become an eminent theorist of liberty. Bentham was a wealthy and eccentric genius who was the preeminent theorist of utilitarianism.

Mill's range of interests was remarkably wide, extending from education and psychology in his two-volume *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind* (1829), to political economy in *Elements of Political Economy* (1826), to penology and prison reform, to the law and history, and, not least, to political theory. During his lifetime, he was best known as the author of *History of British India*, which appeared in six large volumes in 1817. His *History* was something of a sensation and secured for Mill and his large family a measure of financial independence that had previously been sorely lacking.

Mill's modern reputation as a political theorist rests almost entirely on a single essay. In *Government* (1820), Mill maintains that government is neither more nor less than a means to an end, namely, the happiness of the

whole community and of the individuals composing it. Mill's brief essay takes the form of a clipped, concise, logically deductive argument. That argument begins with the assumption that every human being is motivated exclusively by self-interest, and in particular by a single overriding interest—the desire to experience pleasure and to avoid pain (this is the fundamental axiom of utilitarianism). Pleasures and pains come either from nature or from our fellow human beings. Government is concerned directly with the second and indirectly with the first: “Its business is to increase to the utmost the pleasures, and diminish to the utmost the pains, which men derive from one another” (Mill 1991, 4). Yet “the primary cause of government” is to be found in nature itself since humans must wrest from nature “the scanty materials of happiness.” Nature and human nature combine to make government necessary. It is human nature not only to desire happiness but also to invest as little effort as possible in satisfying that desire. Labor being the means of obtaining happiness, and our own labor being painful to us, we will, if not prevented, live off the labor of others. To the degree that others enjoy the fruits of my labor, my primary incentive for working—namely my own happiness—is diminished if not destroyed.

Therefore, Mill continues, the primary problem in designing political institutions is to maximize the happiness of the community by minimizing the extent to which some of its members may encroach on, and enjoy, the fruits of other people's labor. This cannot happen, Mill maintains, in a monarchy (in which a single ruler exploits his subjects) or in an aristocracy (in which a ruling elite exploits everybody else). Nor can communal happiness be maximized in a direct democracy since the time and effort required for governing would be subtracted from that available for engaging in productive labor. The only system that serves as a means to the end of individual and communal happiness is representative democracy, in which citizens elect representatives to deliberate and legislate on their behalf and in their interest. The question quickly arises, however, as to how representatives can be made to rule on the people's behalf rather than on their own. Mill's answer is that frequent elections and short terms in office make it unlikely that elected representatives will legislate only for their own benefit. After all, representatives are drawn from the ranks of the people to which they can, after their term in office ends, expect to return. Given what

we might nowadays call the incentive structure of representative government, representatives have every reason to promote the people's interests instead of their own. Indeed, in a properly structured system, there will be an "identity of interests" between representatives and their constituents.

There are marked methodological affinities between Mill's deductive approach to political theorizing and modern rational choice theory. Both begin by assuming that human beings are by nature self-interested and that most if not all political behavior can be explained as attempts by political actors to promote their own interests.

Terence Ball

See also [Bentham, Jeremy](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Mill, John Stuart](#); [Liberalism](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Scottish Enlightenment](#); [Utilitarianism](#)

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Mill, John Stuart

John Stuart Mill (1806–73) changed the way in which the modern world views, and legal systems address, the issues of individual liberty of thought, expression, lifestyle, and action. His ideas remain both influential and controversial to this day.

Life

Mill was born in London as the oldest of nine children and had to endure a most unusual childhood. His father, James Mill, was a popularizer of the utilitarian philosophy of Jeremy Bentham, and it was for the promulgation of these views that John Stuart was trained. He was educated with an intensity that gave him, as he himself put it, a quarter of a century ascendancy over his contemporaries. This advantage was costly to Mill, for it involved a childhood without playthings, without holidays, and although he did have eight younger siblings—from whom he seems to have been distant—without the company of children of his own age. The last deprivation would have been impossible had he gone to school, but no school would have imposed the regime that his father desired, and so James Mill educated his son himself. Consequently, John Stuart commenced learning Greek at the age of three and Latin at the age of eight. Clearly, Mill's distance from the norms of his time was immense. In an age of widespread illiteracy, he was highly educated, just as in an age of widespread religious observance, he was thoroughly secular. At the age of

13, he was sent for a year to France with the family of Samuel Bentham, the brother of Jeremy. Here he enjoyed a more relaxed atmosphere than at home and, more significantly, commenced a lifelong path of sympathetic engagement with French thought, which later included correspondence with Alexis de Tocqueville and Auguste Comte.

In 1823, at the age of 17, Mill followed his father into the British East India Company, as he had earlier followed him into utilitarianism. He rose high in the company, attaining his father's previous position of Chief Examiner. As well as clearly satisfying his employers, Mill somehow found both the time and energy necessary for his various literary and political aspirations. During his 35 years with the East India Company, he engaged in numerous journalistic campaigns, was founder and editor of the *London and Westminster Review* (1836–40), and wrote two of the major textbooks of the century in their respective fields, *A System of Logic* (1843) and *The Principles of Political Economy* (1848).

After the 1857 Indian Mutiny, the British government felt it necessary to take India under direct state control. Mill led the opposition to this move, fearing that it would lead to policy on India determined by party political considerations. He refused the offer of a job on the new advisory council for India and, at the age of 52, accepted retirement. This decision was, however, far from the end of his working life, for he now published his most influential political writings, *On Liberty* (1859), *Utilitarianism* (1861), *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861), and *The Subjection of Women* (1869). He also became the Liberal Member of Parliament for Westminster between 1865 and 1868, where he is best remembered for proposing an amendment to the 1867 Reform Act that, had it been accepted, would have given votes to women.

Mill's personal life became more public than he would have liked. Harriet Taylor, who inclined toward feminism and socialism, was a married woman when she met Mill in 1830. She was nevertheless intellectually available, in that she had decided that her husband, the pharmacist John Taylor, was her mental inferior. She bore him two sons and a daughter, but he bored her. Mill did not, so Harriet and Mill became regular companions. Mill dined at the Taylor household once or twice a week. John Taylor was amazingly

tolerant of this development, but unsurprisingly, friends and acquaintances began to gossip. So it went on until 1849 when Taylor died. Two years later, Harriet and Mill married. Their time living together was all too brief; Harriet died of tuberculosis in Avignon, France, on November 3, 1858.

Early Thought

In his *Autobiography*, Mill acknowledged the influence on him of the socialistic Saint-Simonian school in France. He recalled being “greatly struck with the connected view which they for the first time presented to me, of the natural order of human progress; and especially with their division of all history into organic periods and critical periods” (Mill 1981, vol. xxiii, 171). This classification is evident in Mill’s first major journalism, his five articles on “The Spirit of the Age” that appeared in *The Examiner* in 1831. Their main theme was that society was suffering the disabilities of a transitional state. The old ideas no longer carried conviction. The constituted authorities no longer commanded respect. Power was held by those unfit to exercise it. Authority and ability no longer coincided. Old institutions and doctrines had fallen into well-deserved disgrace. Society had to change so that expertise was elevated to the superior position that its merits deserved.

In 1823, Mill had formed the Utilitarian Society and yet soon thereafter became ambivalent about his intellectual heritage. His famous mental crisis of 1826–27 may be seen as a process that led to him gaining a broader philosophical outlook. He dared not openly criticize Bentham while James Mill was still alive, but in 1833, he wrote an anonymous appendix to E. Lytton Bulwer’s *England and the English*. Here he stated that Bentham was not a profound analyst of human nature, had too little knowledge of other people’s writings, omitted the importance of conscience, and overstated selfish motives.

In 1836, James Mill died. His son was now free to say openly what he thought, and in 1838 and 1840, he published what may be regarded as companion pieces on “Bentham” and “Coleridge.” For Mill, Bentham and Samuel Taylor Coleridge represented polar opposites; one was a representative of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, and the other of the

reaction against it. They were the two great English minds of their age. Although Bentham is acknowledged as a great thinker, what is more striking is the extent to which Mill bit the hand that had fed him. He noted that Bentham had no interest in other thinkers, a limited notion of human nature, no sense of the importance of honor and duty, and nothing to say on how humankind might improve itself. Equally striking, but even more upsetting for his radical friends, was Mill's appreciation of Coleridge. Mill presented the mentality of the Enlightenment as one-sided, good for demolition, and imaginative in its models for society, but neglectful of the factors that held society together. Mill clearly appreciated Coleridge's idea of a clerisy, especially on the understanding that it need not necessarily be a religious organization.

Mill's *A System of Logic* went into eight editions, including, surprisingly, a cheap edition for the working classes. Its main concern was to refute the intuitionist philosophy that downplayed, or even denied, the role of experience in discovering truths and was, Mill thought, the basis of conservative attitudes. He also wanted to refute the determinism of the Owenites and assert the existence of free will. There was a personal motive behind this intent in that Mill had been described by critics as a "manufactured man." After his mental crisis, he felt that he had been able to develop beyond the conditioning of his childhood. It was all a matter of determination. People could make or reform their own character if they truly had the will to do so. This freedom of the individual also applied to social classes and societies; they could all improve and escape from their limitations and backwardness if they chose to do so. This apparent distinctiveness of human agents sits uneasily with Mill's simultaneous assertion that the method of the social and the physical sciences was one and the same.

In terms of political theory, the book's most interesting sections deal with the nature of the social sciences and historical change. In this area, one of the main influences was Auguste Comte, with whom Mill had an intense but fairly brief correspondence in the 1840s. Mill fell out with Comte over the latter's views on female inferiority and described his system as "liberticide" (Mill 1972, vol. xiv, 294); yet he remained impressed with his delineation of humanity advancing through theological, metaphysical, and

positivist stages. Mill was concerned with many of the same intellectual problems as Comte. For example, he believed that the basic issue in the social sciences was to uncover the law by which one type of society produces its successor. In Mill's view, the basic cause of social development was intellectual: Advances of knowledge led to all other kinds of progress. This concern clearly links Mill not only with Comte, but also with three other founders of sociology, Alexis de Tocqueville, Karl Marx, and Émile Durkheim. Like both Comte and Marx, Mill looked for two kinds of empirical laws of society, exactly similar to what Comte called social statics and social dynamics. Unlike them, however, he was no determinist; the future held out possibilities rather than certainties.

Mill's *Principles of Political Economy* was one of the basic economic textbooks of its century, with seven editions published between 1848 and Mill's death in 1873. For Mill, a competitive market economy leads to the most efficient use of resources, so he wanted the market principle extended into all areas where it might bring benefit. In its contemporary context, this belief had an anti-aristocratic thrust, for legal patterns stemming from feudal roots still protected some landed estates from the full force of the market economy. Mill instanced the existence in law of entails, by which inheritance was predetermined. The result was that an heir assured of his inheritance was likely to grow up lazy. Land was most likely to be used productively when it was an object of commerce. In Mill's view, competition cheapened the product and was a stimulus to progress. In contrast, those protected against competition were likely to become idle and unintelligent.

Competition, then, has a salutary influence on people's morality. Where, however, Mill asked, was the competitive society going? Could it progress indefinitely? Mill had learned from David Ricardo that the return on capital tends to diminish and so economic development could not continue indefinitely. For Adam Smith and Ricardo, this conclusion was disturbing. For Mill, on the contrary, the stationary state was to be welcomed. Competition was not to be all and end all of life, nor was the pursuit of material success. The virtues of the market society were now becoming overwhelmed by their attendant vices. Material progress had its vital part to play in bringing backward societies into the modern age but should not be

mistaken for progress as such. With the problem of productivity solved and with the economy stationary, there would still be as much scope as ever for moral and intellectual progress.

So the market economy could safely be left to run its downward course, although any departure from it, through state intervention, was permissible only if clearly for the general good. Mill was in principle suspicious of the state, which already had too much power and too extensive an influence. Officials, even of a democratic state, could be just as tyrannical as those of a despotic one. Mill thought that people understood their own business better than the government could, and that most things are done worse by government than they would be by the individuals most concerned with the matter. Furthermore, and crucially, the greater the government activity, the less scope remains for individual exertion and self-improvement. Such individual activity should have both proper scope and its own reward. Mill, consequently, opposed a progressive income tax, which he thought would merely impose a penalty on those who had worked harder or saved more diligently than others.

Although Mill clearly wanted to hold the state at bay, he found that principle continually retreated before expediency. The areas of legitimate state action seemed to grow, while his empirical examples of improper interference remained few. Mill was suspicious of the state but committed to personal self-development and found that the latter came to require the former, for individual prosperity required an infrastructure of, at least, law and order, a currency, standard weights and measures, as well as roads and canals. It was necessary that education be made compulsory, children be safeguarded, and the mentally ill be cared for. Also, infant industries might need protection. The functions of the state, then, are either prohibitive or facilitative. The boundary of its activities could not be determined by a principle about its own intrinsic scope but by whether it augments or retards personal development. In this way, Mill started along the path that, later in the century, led to the “New Liberalism” of Thomas Hill Green, J. A. Hobson, Leonard Hobhouse, and Herbert Croly. On the insistence of his wife, Mill included a chapter in *Political Economy* called “On the Probable Futurity of the Labouring Classes.” It needs saying that the socialism with which he came to sympathize was not that of the twentieth-century

centralized state, but of small, relatively egalitarian communities of voluntary participants. He gave further consideration to these ideas in his “Chapters on Socialism,” written in 1869 but not published until 1879, six years after his death.

On Liberty

Mill’s most enduring work is *On Liberty*, whose main theme concerns the threat to individuality in the age of mass society. In terms of individuality, Mill was concerned with the problem of when society could rightly interfere with the individual. This question led him to draw a distinction between two kinds of action: self-regarding and other-regarding. Only in the latter case had society a right to interfere with individual actions. Contemporary and later critics have found it hard to draw a clear dividing line between these two kinds of action. For example, as Mill realized, taking drugs might seem like a self-regarding action, but it can lead to personal disablement that has the other-regarding consequences of family stress and strains and costs on the welfare services. What remains significant is Mill’s pioneering attempt to establish proper limits to social and political interference.

Mill not only defined liberty negatively as consisting in the absence of outside pressures, but also he added a positive side. This consisted of liberty as the free exercise of rationality. This need, he said, was a human requirement. Rationality, however, was not equally attainable by everyone. Some people are not yet fit for liberty. In his *Autobiography*, Mill asserted that representative democracy was not an absolute principle. Its application was a matter of time, place, and circumstances. Mill, then, may be described as a developmental liberal in that peoples qualify for the liberal rights and freedoms only when they attain a fairly high level of general development. In the first chapter of *On Liberty*, he explicitly left out of account backward societies still at early stages of development.

Mill is perhaps most widely known for his argument on freedom of thought. His striking basic statement on this is the following:

If all mankind minus one, were of one opinion, and only one person of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind (as quoted in S. Collini 1989, 20).

Mill then provided a number of justifications, of varying plausibility, for his position: that to silence an opinion is to rob the human race; that the opinion we wish to suppress might actually be right; that even false opinions have a positive function in forcing people to defend their beliefs; and that we can never be fully certain that the opinions we wish to suppress are false and ours are valid. Finally, Mill made a partial withdrawal. He now considered the possible social consequences of free speech and decided that in some cases law and order had priority. Opinions, then, should still be free, but their expression should be limited if they were likely to have sufficiently detrimental consequences in practice.

In 1835 and 1840, Mill had reviewed the two volumes of Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* and thereby did much to make the work known and appreciated in Britain. Mill himself was much influenced by Tocqueville's analysis of mass society. This was a condition in which the old social gradations were breaking down. Individuals were no longer members of a particular class or group but of society in general. An atomized society was emerging in which individuals became lost in the crowd. Mediocrity was becoming the dominant power. Some commentators have seen this concern as an opposition to rising working-class influence. Mill certainly did not want the uneducated to have equal voting rights, but here he was explicit regarding to whom he was referring. In England, public opinion was that of the middle class and in America that of the white population. Either way it was a collective, mediocre mass. Liberty's old enemies were located at the apex of society: kings, governments, and churches. The new enemy was in the middle of the social pyramid. This change of opponent could lead to liberty's defenders being caught off their guard by the change of direction from which the current danger came. Mill thought the threat mattered for two reasons. First, liberty was a requirement of human nature. He described human nature as like a tree whose basic forces require it to grow. Second, liberty was the basic prerequisite for social development. In Mill's view,

everything that had elevated European societies above the barbarians was a consequence of allowing freedom of opinion. A threat to this was a threat to European civilization itself. Europe's progress, then, derived from its diversity but was now endangered. Mill reminded his readership of the fate of China. Here was an ancient civilization that had at one time achieved considerable progress, but it had ossified at the point when freedom was curtailed. China, then, had become a backwater; world development had passed it by. For Mill, this analysis was the prelude to a call for action. Individuals should fight back against the pressures to conformity. Even eccentricity, every refusal to bend the knee, was a service in the battle against the stifling pressures of mass society.

Later Writings

An application of some of Mill's ideas on freedom to one specific problem is his *The Subjection of Women*, a bold work given the prevailing climate of opinion, and one that exposed him to considerable ridicule. It was also his only book that lost money for the original publisher, although it later became accepted as a feminist classic. Mill believed that after food and clothing, freedom was our strongest need. Freedom, however, was denied to half the species, to women. Mill instanced the situation where in Britain the children and property of a marriage legally belonged to the husband and noted that women had only limited access to higher education. They also had no vote, for Mill had failed in his attempt to amend the 1867 Second Reform Bill so as to grant them the vote on the same terms as men. In the decade when slavery had been abolished in the United States, Mill declared that a wife was a slave in the fullest sense of the word.

In Mill's view, the inferior status of women had originated in conquest. It was the sole surviving legacy of the anachronistic law of the strongest. Women's inferior legal status, then, was a consequence of their lesser physical stature, for when law first emerged, it had sanctioned prevailing relationships. This era, of course, was such a long time ago that women's lower status had come to seem natural, often even to women themselves. But, argued Mill, "What is now called the nature of women is an eminently artificial thing" (as quoted in S. Collini 1989, 138). Mill's basic position was that, unlike what had happened previously, the relationship between the

sexes should be based on complete equality. He also hinted at the importance of feminism for the solution of the Malthusian problem.

In his essay “Utilitarianism,” Mill attempted to meet the criticism that the doctrine was a hedonistic one worthy only of swine. On sheer quantities of pleasure, it might appear that a pig, well fed and lacking ethical qualms, would score higher than Socrates on the felicific calculus. This conclusion would be a humiliating moment for Western philosophy. Mill rescued Socrates on the basis that his pleasures, although less clearly apparent than those of the swine, are nevertheless of a higher qualitative order and that this elevation gives them a greater weighting. Mill’s positing, then, of a quality axis in addition to the quantity one represents a significant break from, and complication of, Bentham’s egalitarian formulation that each person is the best judge of his or her own happiness; in other words, the source of pleasure is irrelevant in terms of its value.

The designation of utilitarianism as a doctrine worthy only of swine, attributed to Thomas Carlyle, relates to the obvious selfishness of pursuing solely one’s own happiness. Where does this criticism leave Bentham’s pursuit of the greatest happiness of the greatest number? It would seem that here we have two different and potentially contrasting motivations. Mill sought to resolve them by saying that as between the two aims, one should judge in an impartial way. This view, of course, clashes with a basic tenet of natural justice: that one cannot be a neutral judge in one’s own case. So, on some accounts, Mill’s attempts to rescue utilitarianism from obvious objections merely landed it in still greater difficulties.

In *Considerations on Representative Government*, Mill applied some of his earlier concerns to an increasingly democratic political system. Thus, he advocated proportional representation as a means of protecting minority opinions, and in order to defend quality against quantity, he argued that the franchise should not extend to the illiterate, to those receiving welfare, or to nontaxpayers. In pursuit of the liberal ideal of equal opportunities, he also called for competitive entry into the Civil Service, a reform introduced ten years later.

Mill is now widely regarded as the greatest nineteenth-century liberal thinker. During his lifetime, however, there was more respect for his

intellect than for his opinions. In a number of ways, he seemed dangerously radical. For example, he made scathing comments about the aristocracy, approved of the French revolutions of 1830 and 1848, had no obvious religious beliefs, and sympathized with the grievances of the Irish, with the North in the U.S. Civil War, and with socialistic experiments. He also had what seemed at the time to be ridiculous and dangerous views on sexual equality. In some ways, Mill was, as he himself believed, ahead of his time. What remains most valued and timely today is his defense of individuality and free speech. Perhaps no thinker has more influenced modern systems of law in specifying the limits of the government's proper powers over individuals. Mill's most obvious sectarian influence is the various libertarian movements and political parties around the world, especially in the United States. More generally, the essence of liberalism is the right to be different in nonharmful ways, and that right is the core of what Mill was trying to defend.

Michael Levin

See also [Bentham, Jeremy](#); [Empire and Political Thought](#); [English Enlightenment](#); [Feminism](#); [Freedom of Expression](#); [Liberalism](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Malthus, Thomas Robert](#); [Mill, James](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Progress](#); [Republicanism](#); [Scottish Enlightenment](#); [Socialism](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Tocqueville, Alexis de](#); [Utilitarianism](#)

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Modernism

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Modernism refers to the artistic practices of Enlightenment modernity in crisis. Those practices sought to bear the burden of political failure by simultaneously interrogating and seeking to twist free of the premises of enlightened rationalism that had proved not only incapable of realization but also were perceived to be wrong in themselves. Central among the recurring motifs of modernism's critical practice is the repudiation of the idea that social practices can be grounded on unchanging and rationally secured foundations; this entails the embrace of contingency over eternity, particularity over universality, the new over the old, process over product, and a demand for experimentation without end.

If, since Friedrich Schiller, artistic modernism has been the stand-in for an absent politics, political modernism is the refashioning of politics itself under the sign of modernist self-consciousness. Although elements of a political modernism are widely scattered, it is in the political thought of Hannah Arendt and Jacques Rancière that it has achieved perspicuous presentation.

For both Arendt and Rancière, political philosophy has been throughout its history the repudiation of politics by making political action into an instrument for achieving ends external to political action itself. Philosophy begins with the denial of the autonomy of politics: According to Arendt, it was Plato's horror and grief over Athens's treatment of Socrates that led him to subsume politics under philosophy, making the idea of a

homogeneous and stable social order the truth of politics. Even Karl Marx, Rancière argues, understands political antagonism as a displaced manifestation of the true socioeconomic antagonism between classes, entailing that politics can exist only with the promise of abolishing itself.

Arendt's first modernist gesture is to argue that the domain of politics does not concern rational truth but opinion. Opinions matter because the world appears to each individual differently; the objectivity of the appearing world is not a truth beyond it but solely the acknowledgment that the same world is available from different perspectives, and it is through multiplying and evaluating perspectives that social meaning evolves. Because no one can know another's perspectival opinion before having it presented, then in politics, differences matter; politics is the domain of pluralism and difference, not of identity and sameness.

For Rancière, social order—what he calls “the police order”—is the normatively saturated appearing of a social world from the perspective of a dominant class. Political action is speaking and acting that contests a given police order; political action occurs by a theatrical multiplying of perspectives, creating a dissensus over how the world appears, revealing previously excluded concerns and interests in a manner that makes their earlier exclusion appear as “wrong.” Since each new social order is a police order, then politics is the endless attempt to equalize the unequal.

For Arendt, because politics occurs through the revealing of the world from different perspectives, the primary mode of politics is speaking and acting together. Because the meaning of our life together beyond the pragmatic requirements of social reproduction—beyond the requirements of “labor” and “work” in Arendt's lexicon—is given through how we understand our life together, then life becomes meaningful only through political action. Political action gives to labor and work their human meaning through creating the terms of our being together—what Arendt calls “power.”

In laboring, we repeat those doings necessary for our survival as natural beings; in work, we bring into being artifacts whose originals exist as independent ideas; only in action do we begin something new. For Arendt, each action is a new beginning, a new way of connecting and bonding us one to another. Arendt labels the human capacity for new beginnings

“natality.” Natality is constitutive of the human condition; the human condition is human life as conditioned, as subject to conditions that may change or disappear altogether.

Unsurprisingly, in light of these claims, Arendt, belatedly, came to regard first revolution, as exemplified by the American Revolution, and then civil disobedience as the paradigms of political action. Civil disobedience reveals that the truth of revolutionary founding is necessarily a re-founding. If action is essentially beginning, and beginning best exemplified by revolutionary founding, then the truth of founding must be re-founding, beginning again.

Modernism is the self-consciousness of modernity; in German, modernity is *Neuzeit*, new time. Political modernism is the transformation of this new understanding of social and historical time into an idea of political action in which the meaning of the human is an ongoing experiment, requiring continual renewal.

J. M. Bernstein

See also [Arendt, Hannah](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Progress](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Modernization

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Modernization

Modernization is a process of political, social, economic, and cultural change as countries move toward more differentiated and complex forms of social and political organization. The main theoretical contribution to the study of modernization has been that of American postwar sociological theories. These theories are typically developed around the implicit or explicit dichotomy between two ideal types: “modern” societies, which are depicted as urban, developed, or industrialized, and “traditional” societies, which are usually portrayed as rural, backward, or underdeveloped. An evolutionary process that follows certain laws or, at least, discernible general patterns of development connects these two types of social structure. The underlying assumption of the postwar modernization theories is that all societies follow a similar historical course of development, eventually leading to increasing differentiation and complexity. Some theories, such as that of Talcott Parsons, emphasize the role of endogenous factors in the process of modernization, while others focus on the diffusion of exogenous factors such as values, technology, and forms of social and political organization. In both cases, the aim is to identify the main social and economic variables and institutional mechanisms responsible for the process of modernization of Western countries to transfer this knowledge to developing nations.

These theories of modernization came under close scrutiny in the 1970s. Three main criticisms can be identified. First, the premise that there is a universal original situation (that of underdevelopment), from which all

countries begin their evolutionary path to modernity, has been criticized on both historical and analytical grounds. Second, the prescriptive character that often accompanies modernization analyses is increasingly rejected by developing countries on the grounds of paternalism or external interference. Postcolonial approaches and subaltern studies have been pivotal in the articulation of this sort of criticism. Third, and more importantly, there is a growing dissatisfaction with the premise shared by most modernization theories that, despite some historical differences, present-day developing countries are bound to modernize through the same stages and processes as developed countries went through before.

This particular criticism has led to the development of the main theoretical alternative to postwar modernization theories, S. N. Eisenstadt's paradigm of "multiple modernities." As a macro-sociological theory, Eisenstadt's approach to the comparative study of civilizations represents an alternative to the postwar modernization theories. Eisenstadt began his career as a follower of Parsons, but in the course of the 1960s, he grew increasingly critical of Parsons's evolutionism, turning instead to Max Weber as his main source of inspiration. Eisenstadt's notion of multiple modernities rejects not only the Parsonian theories of modernization and of convergence of industrial societies, but also the classical sociological analysis of Karl Marx, Émile Durkheim, and even Weber. Eisenstadt's point is that reality proved Parsons's evolutionism wrong. Instead of the expected convergence of individual societies toward a common model of "modern society," with the United States playing the self-reassuring role of the "pioneer," actual developments around the globe indicate that different societies have modernized along different lines of institutional development. Although all societies are becoming "modern," the precise meaning of "modern" and its institutional expressions vary enormously.

Eisenstadt's macro-sociological theory of comparative civilizations identifies five major factors shaping the institutional contours of the "multiple modernities" (Eisenstadt 2006, 207–08). First, the contours of modernities have been changing as a result of the internal dynamics of the various institutional arenas (political, economic, technological, etc.) of each society. Second, modernities have been shaped by the political struggles between different states. Third, the shifting hegemonies in different

international systems have also contributed to shaping the institutional contours of modernities. Fourth, the confrontation between modernity and non-Western civilizations (such as the Islamic or the Japanese) is yet another relevant shaping factor. Fifth, the confrontations resulting from the promises of modernity (e.g., political liberal democracy) and its actual concretizations (e.g., liberal democracy as the political regime of only a few developed countries) activate the consciousness of the contradictions inherent in the cultural program of modernity. According to this perspective, the empirical study of processes of political modernization involves a threefold schema composed of key social groups' motivations and actions, cultural visions (ideological, religious, etc.), and institutional patterns, such as constitutional arrangements.

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See also [Durkheim, Émile](#); [Progress](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [Weber, Max](#)

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Montesquieu, Baron de

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Montesquieu, Baron de

Charles-Louis de Secondat, Baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu (1689–1755), stands as one of the most acclaimed writers of the French Enlightenment. Yet along with this renown, there remains a great deal about his work that is enigmatic, as a result of the broad reach of his intellectual ambitions, the breadth of his research, and a writing style that aims to provoke reflection rather than provide exhaustive analysis. Although born into a minor family of the *noblesse d'épée* (the traditional or old nobility), Montesquieu is sometimes regarded as providing an intellectual defense of the class of *noblesse de robe* (those made noble by holding certain official charges) whose ambitions were tied to the institutional fortunes of the regional courts in old regime France, the *parlements*.

Early Life and Career

Montesquieu was born in the Chateau of La Brède, some 25 km outside the city of Bordeaux, in early 1689. He was schooled by fathers of the Congregation of the Oratory at the college of Juilly (in French and Latin). From 1705 until 1713, he studied law at the University of Bordeaux and at the law courts in Paris, the latter under the tutelage of Nicolas Desmolets, who encouraged Montesquieu at the same time to explore his broader intellectual interests. On returning to La Brède, he took on seigniorial duties and the position of *président à mortier* (principal magistrate) of the *parlement* of Bordeaux, an office inherited from his uncle.

His career in the law courts in Bordeaux (1714–26) offered him practical insight into the broader institutional dynamic of old regime France and into ways in which the commitments and principles of monarchy played out among the various claims of regional, institutional, and social corps. Although he came to acknowledge that the practice of law was not his vocation, the study of law was a lifelong passion, and he retained his title of *Président* even after ultimately selling his claims to the office.

While serving as a magistrate, Montesquieu pursued some of his broader intellectual interests through participation in the activities of the Académie of Bordeaux. His early writings of this period, though, were far surpassed with the publication of his best seller, *Lettres persanes* (1721).

Lettres persanes and L'Esprit des lois

Through the letters of Usbek, a Persian domestic despot, and his companion Rica, written to a number of friends in Ispahan while they traveled to and around Europe, Montesquieu offers a literary structure that satirically reframes French social and political mores. By playfully mocking key sources of authority and tradition in French life, Montesquieu both touched on and fuelled a growing tendency of critical reflection within the circles of the burgeoning public sphere.

Spurred on by his literary success, Montesquieu expanded his networks into prominent circles of Parisian literary and social exchange, and he was led to seek further enlightenment, abandoning his judicial career and traveling around Europe for three years, including a longer stay in England, where he was to attend sessions of the British Parliament and meet a number of British public figures. The visit to England was formative in his intellectual development, leading him to reflect on the possibility of a new type of hybrid regime that combined features of monarchy and republicanism and that implicated a new understanding of public sentiment shaped by the pervasiveness of commerce and the dominant rhetoric of self-interest.

On his return from his travels, he began a more serious life of study and in 1734 published his *Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains et de leur decadence*. Although sometimes regarded as a thinly

veiled indictment of Louis XIV's policies of protracted war and expansionism, this piece is also not without merit in Montesquieu's own intellectual development, being the first piece where he invokes in a serious way the notion of *l'esprit général* or the idea that a number of social and cultural factors contribute to a moral climate that both shapes and limits what is possible in the political sphere. Still, this work and most of what followed it into the 1740s is generally considered as a prelude to his most important work, *L'Esprit des lois*, published in 1748.

L'Esprit des lois seeks to articulate a general theory that can account for the diversity of human laws that exist as well as provide some basis for adjudicating the appropriateness of those laws. Along with a general theory of causes that draws from a wide variety of factors including geography, climate, commerce, religion, diverse sociological factors, and gender roles and that provides an explanatory framework for a number of legal particularities, Montesquieu structures his broad analysis of the differences that exist among states on the ideas of the nature and principle of regimes. The *nature* of a regime refers to the general institutional structure by which power is distributed, and the *principle*, perhaps the greatest theoretical innovation offered by Montesquieu, refers to the quality and intensity of sentiment shared by leaders and the public and that plays a role in legitimizing, motivating, and setting limits to the use of political power.

This work was celebrated across Europe, although not without concern from the church censors. His remaining work until his death in 1755 was largely spent defending the orthodoxy of his claims.

Rebecca Kingston

See also [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [French Enlightenment](#); [French Political Thought](#); [Liberalism](#)

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Morris, William

William Morris (1834–96), poet, artist, essayist, socialist, designer, translator, tapestry maker, pioneer of book design, and radical ecologist, has influenced the development of nonparliamentary socialist thought for more than 120 years. An unwavering believer in simplicity of life, abolition of “masters,” and shared possession of (and responsibility for) all the means of production, Morris argued tirelessly that artistic endeavors of all sorts—but especially “the lesser arts”—were ethical tests and measures of the value of such production. Animated by these ideals, he also strove to act on his other lifelong conviction: that reliance on half-measures and parliamentary maneuvers undermined socialist ideals of “fellowship” and fetishized political power as a form of property and a corrupt (and corrupting) end in itself.

By way of avocation—so to speak—Morris was also one of the nineteenth-century’s most active architectural and artistic preservationists. An agnostic haunted by the unsung accomplishments of anonymous artists and artisans, in 1877, he founded the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (“Anti-Scrape”), which saved hundreds of churches and other ancient architectural creations from demolition under the guise of “restoration.”

Born March 24, 1834, in Walthamstow, Morris was the third child and eldest son of Emma Shelton and William Morris Sr., a London banker and mine-owner who died when Morris was 14. Morris studied at Marlborough College (1848–51) and Exeter College, Oxford (1853–56), and briefly

apprenticed in the office of the Gothic revival architect G. B. Street before he married Jane Burden, an Oxford stableman's daughter, in 1859. In 1861, he and several close friends formed the design and decorating firm of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Co. (later Morris and Co.), but he also devoted many of his apparently boundless energies from 1856 to 1877 to art and literature.

As a student, for example, he edited and wrote for the short-lived *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* (1856). As an artist, he illuminated more than 200 book manuscripts and designed hundreds of images and patterns for stained glass, textiles, and wallpapers for the firm. And as a translator, he prepared renderings of Old Norse texts such as *The Story of Grettir the Strong* (1869), the *Völsunga Saga* (1870), and *The Saga Library* (1891–96) in collaboration with the Icelandic scholar Eiríkur Magnússon. As a gifted and prolific poet, finally, Morris wrote and published *The Defence of Guenevere* (1858), *The Life and Death of Jason* (1867), *The Earthly Paradise* (1868–70), *Love Is Enough* (1873), *Sigurd the Volsung* (1876), and *Poems by the Way* (1891). Directly or indirectly, these works reflected the preoccupations mentioned earlier: respect for prior cultures, anger at historical injustice, and admiration for acts of stoic resistance, unrequited kindness, and redemptive solidarity.

Morris found new ways to honor these ideals when he became a left-Liberal activist in the antiimperial “Eastern Question Association,” one of several organizations formed in the late 1870s to oppose military interventions in Turkey and the Balkans. His active engagement in the first mass antiwar movement in British history deepened his distrust of mainstream political parties, strengthened his contempt for British imperialism, and kindled in him a newly awakened respect for working-class organization as a liberating political force.

As an active socialist speaker and writer from the early 1880s until his death in 1896, Morris drafted and delivered more than 100 essays and lectures devoted to art, labor, socialism, communism, architecture, and the aforementioned “lesser arts,” some of which appeared in *Hopes and Fears for Art* (1882) and *Signs of Change* (1888). In his early, Ruskinian essays and speeches, he argued plainly and conversationally that the industrial

order of nineteenth-century Britain had destroyed the environment, traduced natural human aspirations to make things of worth and value, and effectively reduced men to machines of mass consumption as well as of mass production. A truly just order, by contrast, would enhance workers' lives, "giv[e] us pleasure in our work," and create real added value in the form of an "art made by the people for the people as a joy to the maker and the user" (as quoted in Morris 1910–15, Vol. 22, 5 and 80).

In 1884, Morris helped found a new organization called the Socialist League, which he helped sustain for six years as an indefatigable writer, speaker, and editor of its weekly newspaper *Commonweal*. Ill health began to abridge his activities in 1890, and he devoted much of his energy in the last six years of his life to the Kelmscott Press, a venture in book design that is still studied as a landmark in the history of fine books.

In his many essays in the mid- and late-1880s and 1890s, Morris denounced what he called "commercial war," a perpetual state of overt violence, covert coercion, and relentlessly forced overproduction of shoddy "goods" shoved down workers' throats, luxury "goods" that served no human needs, and destructive "goods" used to sustain the commercial and territorial ambitions of the British empire. In "Useful Work Versus Useless Toil" (1884), for example, he argued that:

[I]t is this robbery (there is no other word for it) which wastes the available labour-power of the civilized world, forcing many men to do nothing, and many, very many more to do nothing useful; and forcing those who carry on really useful labour to most burdensome over-work. (as quoted in Morris 1910–15, Vol. 23, 109–10)

In place of this perpetual war, he advocated communism, a state in which all would do the work they can, and all would have access to the means of production:

The resources of nature therefore, and the wealth used for the production of further wealth, the plant and stock in short, should be

communized. Now if that were done, it would at once check the accumulation of riches. No man can become immensely rich by the storing up of wealth which is the result of the labour of his own brain and hands. (as quoted in Morris 1910–15, Vol. 23, 271)

Especially important to Morris was the *quality* of human work, for “all labour, even the commonest, must be made attractive” (as quoted in Morris 1910–15, Vol. 23, 111). It should, that is, be varied, unforced, undertaken in conditions of adequate rest, and grant a measure of freedom and creativity to each worker “since . . . the main pleasure of life is the exercise of energy in the development of our special capacities” (as quoted in Morris 1910–15, Vol. 23, 137).

For *Commonweal*, which he edited from 1885 to 1890, Morris drafted three major literary works in serial form: *The Pilgrims of Hope* (1885), a tribute to the Paris Commune; *A Dream of John Ball* (1886), a memorial evocation of the Peasant’s Revolt of 1381; and *News from Nowhere, or An Epoch of Rest, Being Chapters from a Utopian Romance* (1890), a utopian vision of a future society that became his most-cited literary work.

Predictably, his contemporaries Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels considered Morris a “sentimental socialist” (Engels to Laura Lafargue, as quoted in Thompson 1976, 471). But there was nothing naive about Morris’s remark, to a correspondent on December 30, 1887, that

[s]ocialism does not rest on the [“scientific” and “determinist”] Marxian theory; . . . the disproving of a theory which professes to account for the facts, no more gets rid of the facts [of inequality] than the medieval theory of astronomy destroyed the sun. (as quoted in Kelvin 1985, Vol. II, 729)

Here and elsewhere, Morris articulated a deeply held broad-left insight—passed down from generation to generation—that “socialism” is an ethic, while dogmatic Marxism is a positivist pseudoscience. Put somewhat differently, his artistic gifts, egalitarian ideals, and faith in the social value

of the “lesser” arts gave a pragmatic as well as aesthetic turn to his personal view of “the Social-Revolution” and gave voice to the ethical ideal—also passed down from generation to generation—of counter-cultural resistance to a smug, philistine, and overwhelmingly hypocritical commercial oligarchy.

Morris’s original family had made “a deal” of money from a strip mine in Devonshire that extracted arsenic after its copper gave out. Possibly mindful of this, he understood, personally and *avant la lettre*, that forced labor and environmental squalor—whether imposed by Roman imperatores, medieval liege lords, corporate oligarchs, or their state-capitalist counterparts (“masters” all)—always, and by definition, “take the hindmost”:

[R]emember that poverty driven below a certain limit means degradation and slavery pure and simple. . . . {A}nother class which we shall never get rid of as long as we are under the tyranny of the devil take the hindmost . . . is the Class of Victims. Now above all things I want us not to forget . . . the fact that the riches of the rich and the comfort of the well-to-do are founded on that terrible mass of undignified, unrewarded, useless misery. . . . Will you think it monstrous that some people have conceived another hope, and see before them the ideal of a society in which there should be no classes permanently degraded for the benefit of the commonweal? (as quoted in Morris 1910–15, Vol. 23, 183–85)

If the man who drafted the passages just quoted was a “sentimental socialist,” it was not in his understanding of economics, but in his refusal to acknowledge human desires to dominate and susceptibilities to inhumane behavior. His views of town planning, architecture, people’s history, environmentalism, fostering of arts and crafts, and pleasurable fulfillment in labor have inspired many social-democratic “palliative measures.” And his outcries against jingoist groupthink, market-driven imperialism, and manipulation of the poor with tainted bread and shoddy circuses have made a deep and enduring contribution to an understanding of what a truly “socialist” society would have to be.

Florence S. Boos

See also [Christian Socialism](#); [Communism](#), [Varieties of](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Owen, Robert](#); [Property, Theories of](#); [Ruskin, John](#); [Socialism](#); [State, Theories of the](#)

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Mosca, Gaetano

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Mosca, Gaetano

Gaetano Mosca (1858–1941) was a political scientist and jurist and a pioneer, along with the economist and sociologist Vilfredo Pareto, of elite theory. Mosca was born in Palermo in Sicily in 1858 and educated at Palermo University. He combined an academic with a political career, teaching constitutional law, public law, and political science in Palermo, Turin, and Rome, and he served starting in 1908 as a conservative-liberal deputy in parliament. From 1914 to 1916, he was undersecretary of state for the colonies, and in 1918, he was appointed a life senator. Mosca was also a regular contributor to newspapers, including the *Corriere della Sera* in Milan, but increasing governmental censorship in the later 1920s induced him to withdraw from journalism.

Although he was highly critical of democratic institutions in his early writings—sharing the disillusionment felt by many from the early 1880s at the way parliament operated in Italy, with its corrupt electoral practices and ill-defined and seemingly unprincipled parties—Mosca came to regard representative government as in fact the least defective of political systems. In 1925, after Mussolini had established his dictatorship, he was one of the signatories of the Manifesto of Antifascist Intellectuals drawn up by the liberal philosopher Benedetto Croce. However, Mosca refused subsequently to take any public stance against Mussolini's regime, confining his opposition to a few incidental remarks on the virtues of representative government in his writings on the history of political ideas, which

constituted his only significant output in the fascist period. He remained a senator until his death in Rome in 1941.

Mosca's two most important studies were the *Teoria dei governi e governo parlamentare* (Theory of Governments and Parliamentary Government), published in 1884, and the 1896 work *Elementi di scienza politica* (The Ruling Class). In these works, he pursued a similar line of thought to Vilfredo Pareto—whose views on the distinction between elites and masses appear to have been arrived at independently and more or less simultaneously. Mosca argued that, throughout history, every society, irrespective of its character (whether it was bureaucratic, plutocratic, military, or religious) and of the fundamental myth or principle on which it sought to base its authority (the will of God, the will of the majority, or the dictatorship of the proletariat) was in fact ruled by organized minorities. Even in a representative system, he suggested, it was not so much the voters who chose the leaders but the leaders who imposed themselves—often unscrupulously—on the electorate. In the case of Italy, he maintained that the Chamber of Deputies in practice represented only the narrow economic interests of the propertied classes, and he advocated intervention by the state to curb the imbalances and injustices that derived from unbridled liberal individualism. He also sought a transformation of the ruling classes to ensure that talent and ability prevailed.

Mosca disliked the term “elite” on the grounds that it implied an often unwarranted moral superiority, and he preferred instead the more neutral concept of the “political class.” He accepted Karl Marx’s idea about the ubiquity of class divisions and conflicts, but he rejected the notion that these might be eliminated: A ruling class could be overthrown, but it would necessarily, he maintained, be replaced by another.

Mosca saw the composition and the manner of ruling of political systems as oscillating between alternative poles or “principles.” A ruling class could be based on inheritance (the “aristocratic principle”) or be open to talented individuals from the lower classes (the “democratic principle”); rulers might heed the wishes of the ruled (the “liberal principle”) or disregard them (the “authoritarian principle”). In common with classical writers such as Aristotle, Mosca—who considered himself a liberal—was inclined to see

the best political system as one in which none of these principles was pushed to an extreme. The liberal and authoritarian principles should be balanced, and although the hereditary principle could result in the ossification of the ruling class, a degree of closure might be beneficial, in that it could reduce the intensity of the struggle for power and allow for the transmission of valuable skills and traditions.

Mosca had no interest in methodology or philosophy, and he did not subject many of his generalizations to serious empirical scrutiny. Nevertheless, his main work, the *Elementi di scienza politica*, remains unsurpassed as a general treatise on politics.

Christopher J.H. Duggan

See also [Class](#); [Italian Political Thought](#); [Mass Society](#); [Michels, Robert](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Pareto, Vilfredo](#); [Political Sociology](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Multiculturalism

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Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is a political ideal and citizenship model that reflects a commitment to creating a pluralistic and diversity-endorsing society in which members of different identity groups are accepted as equal citizens without having to discard cultural or religious markers that they perceive as significant, such as the Islamic headscarf (hijab), the Sikh turban, or the Jewish yarmulke. Multiculturalism also entails a rejection of monoculturalism or the privileging of a dominant majority culture and relegation of minority communities to a marginalized, second-class position. Instead, multicultural policies involve the development of measures of recognition and redistribution of material and symbolic goods that make “differentiated” (as opposed to uniform) citizenship the new standard. The aim is to permit individuals to participate fully in shared spaces, such as the public school, the workplace, or the institutions of government, while expressing, if they so wish, particularized group-based practices and ways of life.

The Unique Challenges of Multiculturalism

Such affirmation of a vision of inclusion through the recognition of diversity marks a significant break from the traditional liberal and civic-republican conceptions that emphasized the importance of uniform or undifferentiated citizenship as a guard against the loss of social cohesiveness and trust among members of the same political community.

While criticizing as unrealistic or unattractive the edifice of liberal and civic-republican “culture-free” institutions, most defenders of multiculturalism nevertheless significantly rely on and affirm the liberal and democratic values of equality, freedom, autonomy, deliberation, and dialogue to justify a degree of public recognition of difference, within a new matrix of inclusive citizenship. The trickier issue is to find ways to translate these values into just and fair measures that make inclusive citizenship a reality that counters the marginalization of nondominant minorities, while providing viable equality assurances for all individuals, both within and across different communities and affiliations. Perhaps the clearest expression of this attempt to fit multicultural citizenship within these contours is found in the influential writings of Will Kymlicka, who argues that culture provides an important background condition for facilitating individual freedom and autonomy because it creates a context of choice in which we can develop our sense of social self and group identity, which in turn allows us to make meaningful choices about how to pursue our lives. His argument brings together the defense of group-differentiated rights with the acceptance of the primacy of the individual, seeing them as complementary rather than as oppositional to one another.

Yet persistent dilemmas remain: Should every claim that is presumably grounded in “culture” be respected by the state and the wider society? What if it harms others or limits their respective autonomy and spectrum of available choices? When conflicts arise, who, or what entity, should have the authority to determine which demands for exemption, accommodation, or self-governance should be respected? These hard questions evade any neat and simple answers. Indeed, they linger as a source of charged and ongoing deliberations in the world of scholarship and public-policy making, even among those committed to a model of differentiated citizenship; and they provide ample fodder for those who oppose and reject this vision.

Multiculturalism as an official policy was first inaugurated in the early 1970s in Canada and soon thereafter adopted in a modified form by Australia. The 1980s and 1990s saw a range of multicultural policies adopted by other countries as well. Yet even Canada and Australia, which have remained faithful to the core principles of multiculturalism as they entered the twenty-first century, have had to remain sensitive and vigilant to

the delicate balance that exists between respecting diversity and promoting equality. When contemplating how to integrate immigrant populations from diverse backgrounds and help them become new citizens, for example, these countries have invested heavily in encouraging naturalization, facilitating social and economic integration, and providing a secure path to membership while avoiding a heavy-handed demand for assimilation (or giving up one's heritage) as a precondition for gaining access to citizenship and the accompanying sense of belonging. The core idea of these policies is to encourage immigrants to embrace their new home country's identity while retaining their diverse and different backgrounds (linguistic, ethnic, racial, national, cultural, religious, and so on). Incorporating considerations of fairness and equity, the commitment to multiculturalism here treats diversity as a national asset, especially in the era of increased globalization.

The test of such a celebration of diversity lies, eventually, in its success (or failure) at making society more open and accepting of all its members, ensuring their dignity and equality as individuals with multifaceted affiliations. In the legal arena, this entails a search for a balance between a variety of accommodation measures designed to overcome injustices *between* groups while guarding against inequalities *within* communities. This latter aspect becomes especially pertinent in those cases where certain practices and ways of life defended by group power-holders as "traditional" and "authentic" end up disproportionately burdening historically vulnerable and marginalized group members, such as women, sexual minorities, cultural dissenters, and so on. This is not an easy task for any established citizenship model, let alone a relatively novel one such as multiculturalism. The current turn in many European countries against any measure of group-differentiated accommodation or exemption has led some to predict the diminishing fortunes if not the outright "death" of multiculturalism in the second decade of the twenty-first century. This may be an overstatement, but it does invite a critical exploration of the main arguments that have been launched against the justifications for, and the consequences of, multiculturalism. For the sake of analytical clarity and simplicity, these critical accounts are grouped into four categories: (1) the difficulties of defining culture; (2) the effects of multiculturalism on intercommunal relations; (3) concerns about intragroup inequalities; and (4) eroding the "ties that bind."

The Difficulties of Defining Culture

Contemporary discussions of citizenship and multiculturalism fail to treat group formation and claims for recognition as dynamic and political processes that involve power struggles and strategic maneuvering. A related critique is that multiculturalism falls into the trap of classificatory taxonomies, losing sight of the malleability and plasticity of any cultural tradition and the importance of interaction between groups in shaping identity. Legal scholars, for their part, have traced often distorted and ill-informed portrayals of cultural minorities in courthouses and judicial decisions, some of which result from defendants seeking to use a “cultural defense” in an adversarial criminal trial by presenting their individual misconduct or wrongdoing as behavior mandated by their respective culture—often much to the dismay of other members of the same community. This illustrates a broader set of questions that falls under the heading of the difficulties of defining culture: Who can and should speak for a minority community in charged inter- or intracommunal disputes? How to define “culture” or “religion” for the purposes of crafting justifiable policies of accommodation or exemption, and according to what criteria? Who gets silenced when the state “takes sides” in disputes concerning membership demarcation, or the distribution of rights and powers between group members? Yet another concern is that formalized, government-backed multiculturalism policies may inadvertently produce artificially fossilized and essentialized interpretations of living cultures and communities, turning fluid identities that are always in flux into more rigid, fixed, and uncompromising entities with potentially negative effects for the future growth and survival of the relevant tradition.

The Effects of Multiculturalism on Intercommunal Relations

The fear of group-based ghettoization and balkanization is perhaps the most familiar argument against multiculturalism: By recognizing and endorsing the expression of group-differentiated diversity in the public sphere, official multicultural policies can lead to a breakdown and loss of intercultural interaction and trust, the creation of “cultural walls” around ethnocultural

groups, and the encouragement of separation and isolation that, in a worstcase scenario, can lead to intercommunal hatred, conflict, and violence. The risks of having a democratic and peaceful society break down along such lines are seen as so significant that a retreat from multiculturalism is recommended. This demand may take a moderate or radical form. The moderate form may call for the abolishment of government support for cultural or ethnic voluntary associations or their identity-preserving events, encouraging instead a more classic liberal laissez-faire approach to the maintenance of cultural identities by members of minority communities. In other words, the state, according to these critics, should not be engaged in the business of protecting or maintaining minority cultures, leaving this to the “free market” of society.

For proponents of multiculturalism, however, the laissez-faire approach misses the crux of the problem. The basic motivation for adopting group-differentiated policies is to overcome cultural injustices that are typically rooted in unequal social patterns of representation and interpretation. Without proactive measures, there is little to ensure that these intercommunal inequities would ever be broken down or even mitigated. This in turn may affect the self-perception and freedom of members of minority cultures. This is a strong argument in principle, but it may not persuade those who are mostly concerned with nation-building, social cohesion, and the establishment of a shared political community that is founded on common basic principles. For skeptics of multiculturalism, the Dutch experience is instructive. From the early 1980s until the late 1990s, the Netherlands implemented perhaps the most generous group-differentiated set of national policies in Europe with the declared intention of empowering ethnic minorities (many of whom were immigrants that entered the Netherlands by virtue of asylum and family reunification programs). The state supported ethnic schools, media, and other services. The results were far from encouraging. Rates of employment, school dropout, residential segregation, welfare dependency, and a slew of other parameters documented a bleak picture of lack of integration and mobilization for members of nondominant communities. Whether a more integrationist policy would have helped will never be known. Instead, the rise of intercommunal tensions in the post-9/11 era, and the deadly violence

mounted against public figures in the “name” of Islam, led to the unraveling of group-differentiated policies in the Netherlands.

The radical avenue of retreat from multiculturalism may involve legal demands that newcomers express a commitment to the “dominant values and norms” (however defined) of the host country, pass language and “integration tests” if they are already in the country, or take preadmissions tests if seeking entry from abroad. These tests often apply only to those deemed “too different,” namely, non-Western migrants, who are increasingly seen as unwanted and unwelcomed in many European countries. The potentially coercive and exclusionary implications of these new counter-multiculturalism policies are demonstrated by France’s demand that individuals refrain from expressions of certain group-based markers of (religious) identity in their interactions as citizens in public spaces, as exemplified by France’s 2004 national legislation that banned conspicuous religious attire from public schools, including the donning of a Muslim hijab; the 2008 decision of the Conseil d’État declining citizenship to a Muslim woman who spoke French, was married to a citizen, and had three French children (she wore the niqab and declared that she had no knowledge of the principle of *laïcité* and the right to vote) because “she had adopted a radical practice of her religion, incompatible with essential values of the French community, particularly the principle of equality of the sexes.”

These developments illustrate another, less often discussed, angle of the intercultural implications of debates about multiculturalism. Arguably, once the “genie” of identity claims is released from the bottle, it can no longer relate only to the justice claims of minority communities. Especially at times of political upheaval or social tension majorities, too, can make *their* claim to distinctive ethnocultural or national values, norms, and traits, making it potentially far harder for nondominant members to gain full inclusion or even mere legal admission (if they are not citizens). This potential slippage is the dark side of multiculturalism.

Highlighting Intragroup Inequalities

Governmental policies recognizing group-based claims for accommodation or exemption from general laws may have serious and potentially detrimental implications on those who traditionally wielded less powerful positions within minority communities, such as women, religious or cultural dissenters, and sexual minorities. There is a rich body of feminist literature highlighting the concern that an unregulated delegation of authority from the state to cultural minorities over their members in certain fields of social life, especially those involving the regulation and policing of marriage, procreation, and women's bodies, may place female group members in a vulnerable position that puts their rights and liberties as citizens at risk. This is particularly evident when women lack power or access to the tools of reinterpretation of a sacred tradition or where certain gendered practices or dress codes themselves become politicized markers of "identity." These tensions are particularly evident in the realm of family law, where women are often celebrated by their communities as important "cultural conduits" in the struggle to keep the group's distinctive traditions alive, while being asked to remain faithful to unequal structures of distribution of rights, responsibilities, and ultimately, power between men and women. Well-meaning attempts by the multicultural state to redistribute symbolic and actual powers between groups may end up exacerbating and legitimizing unequal practices within these communities.

While elaborating on this "paradox of multicultural vulnerability," relatively few scholars and activists have concluded that the best way to address these pressing realities lies in abandoning a commitment to respecting diversity. Instead, various attempts have been made to overcome, or at least diffuse, these tensions: placing individual autonomy and choice at the center of the analysis in lieu of endorsing an overunified and unchanging conception of culture; demanding that a non-negotiable baseline of human rights and protections be preserved under any regime of accommodation; and allowing access to courts and guaranteed representation for women's organizations in any major political or legal renegotiation of the terms of their community's jurisdictional autonomy, or degree of self-governance in the case of national minorities or indigenous peoples, within the confines of a federated or multilevel governance regime.

Despite obvious hardships and challenges, there are encouraging signs of revival of cultural traditions or reinterpretation of once gendered-traditions in a more egalitarian fashion. One such example is found in South Africa's recent history of recognizing customary laws as part of that country's post-Apartheid constitution, while also infusing gender equality and a "living tree" interpretative approach that permits revisiting unjust provisions from within the customary tradition itself. Other ideas include the development of mechanisms for shared or joint governance that create incentives for state and group officials to serve and address better the demands of women, religious or sexual minorities, or other historically marginalized subsets of the accommodated community. As with other multicultural developments, there is no single or inevitable path; the tensions that have erupted in Europe around the acceptable scope and limits of state intervention in regulating religious dress, especially the covering of the Muslim female body, serve as a fresh reminder of how charged these debates are, and how they are never free from histories of domination, "center" and "periphery" narratives, and broader struggles for recognition and social justice.

Eroding the Ties That Bind

The fourth and final line of critique reflects a deep trepidation that embarking on the path of multiculturalism is the first step toward removing whatever little remains of our shared citizenship in the era of increased globalization pressures. If we are merely united by our differences, what guarantees that citizens would identify with any particular home country, establish the trust and mutual responsibility required for a thriving democracy, or accept the duties of membership, including the commitment to make sacrifices at times of need? What is to remain of a common identity or set of unifying values? Would we still be speaking about sovereign states 100 years from now, or would we witness the disassemblage of territory, rights, and authority (to borrow from Saskia Sassen's terminology) or witness their replacement by either more local or more globalized conceptions of political membership, or perhaps a rise of both in combination ("glocalization")?

If we take full and equal access to society's institutions, centers of power, and the rewriting of narratives of collective identity that diffuse once-

entrenched hierarchical definitions of who belongs and who represents the polity as the ultimate goals of multiculturalism citizenship, then establishing fair terms of inclusion for members of nondominant groups is of paramount importance. It might encourage rather than diminish the identification of immigrants with their new home country, while addressing past injustices in respect of previously incorporated national minorities or indigenous peoples, providing more just terms for their future participation. Such an inclusive vision of multicultural citizenship demands transformation and mutual respect from established citizens and new residents. It marks a rejection of the pattern of demanding assimilation or conformity to the rules and traditions of the dominant national community; it involves instead an ethical and legal commitment to deep diversity and equality that is as remarkable as it is unprecedented.

Ayelet Shachar

See also [Citizenship](#); [Cosmopolitanism](#); [Equality and Egalitarianism](#); [Ethnicity and Political Thought](#); [Freedom of Expression](#); [Liberalism](#); [Pluralism](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Toleration](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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National Socialism

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National Socialism

The term *National Socialism* refers to a political movement and ideology born out of a series of tumultuous events in German history that culminated in the appointment of Adolf Hitler as Chancellor in 1933. National Socialism, also referred to as Nazism, was at its core ultraconservative, hypernationalistic, anticapitalist, antiliberal, anticommunist, anti-Semitic, and militaristic. On the political spectrum, Nazism is generally, although not always, understood to be a variant of fascism and thus a movement of the extreme right. Fascism itself is a revolutionary political philosophy and movement that grew in popularity in several European countries after World War I, exalting the nation above all else and calling for a strong authoritarian figure to fix the problems of the state, especially the rising tide of communism. The first fascist government to appear was that of Benito Mussolini in Italy in 1922. Italian fascism had a profound influence on Hitler. Both ideologically and practically, however, Nazism was far more extreme because of the overwhelming importance of racism in the movement. In fact, the political philosophy of Nazism is so deeply enmeshed in its fanatically devout ideology that many have dubbed it a political religion.

Although some scholars have sought to locate the origins of National Socialist thought in the sixteenth century or even earlier, Nazism was both a product of modernity and a peculiarly German phenomenon. Compared with other European countries, Germany is quite young, having unified its 300-odd independent states into the second German Empire only in 1871.

The formation of a large economic and military power with imperialist ambitions in central Europe at the end of the nineteenth century significantly altered the balance of power on the continent and ended with one of the most deadly and destructive events in world history, World War I (1914–18). Germany's defeat in that war by the allied forces of Britain, France, and the United States had profound effects. The Versailles Peace Treaty blamed Germany solely for the war, forced it to pay hefty reparations, confiscated large swaths of land, and demilitarized it. This punitive outcome left many in that country humiliated and bitter, perhaps none more so than Adolf Hitler.

Adolf Hitler was born to Alois and Klara Hitler (née Pölzl) in the small Austrian village Braunau am Inn in 1889. His middle-class childhood included both considerable conflict with his authoritarian father and utter devotion to his mother, whose death from cancer in 1907 scarred the young man deeply. Hitler's father died in 1903 after suffering a pleural hemorrhage. Much to his parents' dismay, Hitler did not want to follow in his father's footsteps and become a civil servant but fancied himself a painter. This dream led the provincial young man to Vienna in 1908, where he spent five years that became critical in the formation of his worldview. Rejected twice by the Viennese Academy of Art and living on a meager orphan's pension, Hitler found himself painting postcards for spare change and living in a homeless shelter. Thus, the cosmopolitan capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire that produced artistic and intellectual giants like Sigmund Freud and Gustav Mahler was not the Vienna that Hitler knew. He was surrounded by dejected vagabonds like himself who blamed their plight on everyone else. Hitler grew to hate much about the city and the empire in which he lived. He was a voracious reader and consumed large quantities of both the obscure crackpot theories that swirled around Vienna's underbelly and more popular political ideas. The anti-Slavism and Pan-Germanism of Austrian politician Georg von Schönerer, the anti-Semitic demagoguery of Vienna's Mayor Karl Lueger, and the theories of Aryan superiority from cult leader and former Cistercian monk Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels all influenced the young Hitler. It would, however, be incorrect to assume that his political worldview was already cemented at that time. There is little evidence to suggest, for example, that the trademark rabid anti-Semitism of the more mature Hitler was already in place. But that would soon change.

At the age of 24, Hitler avoided mandatory military service in Austria by moving to Munich, Germany. Fed up with the Habsburg monarchy, ineffective parliaments, and multiculturalism and “race mixing,” Hitler could not bear the thought of serving in Austria. His arrival in Germany in 1913 signaled a new sense of belonging, but his bohemian life still seemed aimless. The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand (the heir to the Austrian throne) in Sarajevo in June 1914 changed Hitler’s situation by triggering the outbreak of World War I. The ensuing wave of German nationalism and patriotism swept Hitler up, and he volunteered to fight with the Bavarian infantry. His life now had meaning. He served as a message runner and was injured twice, earning the Iron Cross First and Second Class for valor. Lying in his hospital bed in Pasewalk, Germany, in November 1918 recovering from what new research suggests was probably psychosomatic blindness and not a mustard gas attack as he often claimed, Hitler first learned of Germany’s defeat, the abdication of the Kaiser (German for “emperor”), the naval mutinies, and the subsequent revolution, which threatened to turn the country communist. It was at that exact moment, Hitler later claimed, that he decided to enter into politics.

The dissolution of the monarchy in Germany brought the Social Democratic Party (SPD) to power in 1919, beginning the country’s first experiment with democracy. The Weimar Republic (1919–33), so called because its constitution was crafted there to avoid the revolutionary mayhem in the capital of Berlin, was by no means doomed to failure from the outset. It did, however, face severe political, economic, and social turmoil. Having been created in haste and seemingly foisted on Germans, the Weimar government soon became wildly unpopular with the majority, not least because it had negotiated the humiliating terms of what became known as the “Versailles *Diktat*.” Such an environment made the perfect breeding ground for conspiracy theories of the radical right, and none was more intoxicating or dangerous than the stab-in-the-back legend. According to the myth, the German military had not been defeated on the battlefield but had been, like the Teutonic hero Siegfried in the medieval German epic “The Song of the Nibelungs,” stabbed from behind by a traitorous foe. In this case, German defeat was alleged to have been stage-managed by internal civilian enemies, namely Jews, communists, and Social Democrats. Although untrue, the stab-in-the-back legend found much popular appeal as it squarely placed the

burden of defeat in World War I on the shoulders of the Weimar Republic and Jews. Hitler, who labeled the supposed traitors the “November criminals,” believed in the conspiracy wholeheartedly, and it too had a profound effect on his political thought.

Without money, a vocation, or job prospects, Hitler remained in the army after the war and worked as an informant. Ordered to infiltrate a fledgling political group in Munich called the German Workers’ Party, Hitler, to his surprise, liked much of what he heard at the meetings. On September 12, 1919, Hitler caught the notice of Party founder Anton Drexler when he spoke out for the first time during a meeting at the Sterneckerbräu (beer hall). Spurred on by his military superiors, Hitler soon became the fifty-fifth member of the Party and its most prominent speaker. Hitler soon realized he had found his calling and by 1920 left the army for politics. That same year the party was renamed the National Socialist German Worker’s Party (NSDAP), and the beer-hall rabble-rouser quickly moved to the top because of his oratorical abilities. Unlike so many stodgy politicians of the time, Hitler used emotion to connect with his audiences. Simplicity of language, repetition, and clearly stated, unequivocal positions were part and parcel of his success. His speeches began slowly and quietly to draw the crowds in but increasingly intensified. Carefully choreographed gestures, a quickening pace, and an ever louder voice would bring audiences to a frenetic state at his climactic conclusion. His difficult childhood, war experience, and disdain for the Weimar Republic, all well-rehearsed topics in his speeches, led many to believe that he was one of them and understood their predicament.

Outside of Bavaria, Hitler and the NSDAP were little known until catapulted into the headlines with an abortive coup attempt in November 1923. In an act known as the Beer-Hall Putsch, Hitler and a large band of Nazis stormed a meeting at the Bürgerbräukeller in Munich proclaiming the creation of a new government with well-known war hero General Erich Ludendorff. This attempt to topple the Bavarian government was met the next day by a hail of police bullets on Munich’s Odeonsplatz. Hitler escaped unharmed, but 16 Nazis and 3 policemen died. Tried for high treason, Hitler was allowed by sympathetic judges to use the trial as a public stage for his political intentions. Casting himself as the patriotic,

would-be savior of Germany, Hitler received the minimum five-year sentence but was paroled after eight months in Landsberg prison. Hitler later remarked that his incarceration was his “university paid for by the state” as it allowed him time to catch up on reading and write his turgid, rambling, and often illogical autobiography/political treatise *Mein Kampf* (“My Struggle”). What is more, Hitler learned a vital political lesson from the failed *putsch*; he would have to come to power not by force but through normal channels with support of the masses and the backing of powerful sectors in German society.

National Socialism was always much more a social and political movement than a sophisticated, well-organized political ideology. Even the success of Alfred Rosenberg’s *The Myth of the Twentieth Century*, which was published in 1930 and attempted to provide a theoretical basis for Nazism, remains qualified. Although a best seller from the official Party ideologue, it seems to have been widely owned but little read. Hitler himself found it incomprehensible and never finished it. Nonetheless, from the extant sources, it is possible to list a set of more or less coherent thoughts that made up Nazi ideology. At its core was a racial, Social Darwinist understanding of history. Human races as well as nations, it was believed, were locked in a struggle for survival, and only the most powerful and ruthless would survive. At one time there had been a clear hierarchy of races, but because of miscegenation, this was no longer the case. Such interbreeding caused the decline of the once great (mythic) Aryan German race. If Germany was to become a great world power again, it would need to purge society of all enemies and their influence. It would not be an overstatement to suggest that the utmost prerogative of National Socialism was to create a “racial state.”

The foundation on which Nazism stood was the German *Volk* (“nation” or “people”). Germans were to put their nation and racial comrades above all else, especially themselves. National Socialism sought to create a harmonious national/racial community referred to as the *Volkgemeinschaft*. This community of pure-blooded Germans would work together in a classless society under the leadership of a single, strong leader (*Führer*) for the betterment of the collective. Paramount to the regeneration of Germany was the eradication of “aliens,” above all the ultimate nemesis of Nazism,

the Jews. Unlike Aryans, Hitler wrote in *Mein Kampf*, Jews were the “destroyers of civilization” and were “parasitical.” Although less than one percent of the population in Germany, the Jewish “race” was blamed for everything wrong with Germany and everything the Nazis did not like, from communism and modern art to democracy and capitalism. Immediately after the seizure of power, Nazi legislation such as the Civil Service Act (1933) and Nuremberg Laws (1935) began to strip German Jews of jobs, property, citizenship, and civil rights.

The Nazi consolidation of political power after 1933 was referred to by the legal term *Gleichschaltung* (literally coordination or synchronization), and its main goal was to bring all aspects of German society under the regime’s heel. State governments became wholly subordinate to the national government. Professional and civic organizations were dissolved or converted to Nazified versions of their former selves. The army and the legal and educational systems were “coordinated,” often willingly, in short order. Labor unions and political parties were banned. Interestingly, the first concentration camp, at Dachau (just outside of Munich), was opened in March 1933, not to house Jews but to deal with the massive wave of arrests of communists made by police. Although highly critical of free-market capitalism, the Nazi government made no sweeping economic changes and no real attempt to establish a corporatist state. Although there was certainly far more government regulation and oversight, profitable business practices often bolstered the regime’s political objectives, thus making radical economic change unnecessary.

Another central tenet of Nazism was the belief in the need for *Lebensraum* (“living space”) in Eastern Europe. The third demand in the NSDAP’s official party platform demanded new territories for the “nourishment of our people and settling of our surplus population.” The inability of Germany to feed itself off its own land was deemed to be a major cause of its defeat in World War I. The loss of colonies after Versailles only poured salt on wounds. Such a goal could be achieved only by force, and in the mid-1930s, Germany began a massive rearmament campaign followed by the invasion of Poland in 1939 and the beginning of World War II. After swiftly defeating the Poles and their French allies, Nazi Germany set its sights on the Soviet Union in June 1941, despite the nonaggression pact that had been

signed by Hitler and Stalin in 1939. The Soviet Union, and the resources of the Ukrainian “breadbasket” in particular, were a sort of holy grail in Hitler’s quest for living space. Once conquered, the Slavs of Eastern Europe, who were considered *Untermenschen* (“subhumans”) in Nazi ideology, would become slave laborers for their new Aryan masters.

It is clear, then, that at its core Nazism’s political philosophy was undergirded by hatred and violence. Even in the tumultuous years after World War I, however, the radical stance of the NSDAP did not resonate with Germans. In 1928, the NSDAP received less than three percent of the vote. Only after the bottom dropped out of the world economy with the Great Depression beginning in 1929 did Nazism’s promises of bread, work, and the return of the respected, powerful German empire receive notice. Yet the Nazi Party never received a majority vote in national elections. Hitler was the appointed, not the elected, chancellor of a conservative coalition wherein it was believed he could be easily manipulated and controlled. But he was underestimated.

The inevitable outcome of Nazism was World War II, an incomparable event in history with perhaps more than 60 million dead, including the 6 million Jews murdered in the German Holocaust. Despite its horrifically violent and genocidal past, National Socialism is not dead. Neo-Nazism, the attempt by hate groups to revive in part or whole German National Socialism after 1945, has sprung up across the globe. Often linked to white supremacist or skinhead movements, neo-Nazis uncritically mimic the ideas of Hitler, applying them to present conditions. As shown by the racially driven “kebab” murders of the National Socialist Underground in Germany during the first years of the twenty-first century, vigilance is required to make certain that the terrorist activities of present-day fascists remain the infrequent actions of the lunatic fringe.

Mark B. Cole

See also [Communism](#), [Varieties of](#); [Darwinism and Social Darwinism](#); [Fascism](#); [Franco](#), [Francisco](#); [German Political Thought](#); [Ideology](#); [Race and Racism](#); [Revolution](#); [Totalitarianism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [War and Political Thought](#)

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Nationalism

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Nationalism

Nationalism is one of the most influential political and cultural components of modern political thought and human cultures. It shapes the institutions and policies of governments, the collective identities of large social communities, and the personal identities of most individuals. Modern education systems teach people the meaning of their nations and portray nationality as a key aspect of modern selfhood. Nationalism also influences public activities such as voting, holding government offices, serving in military forces, paying taxes, organizing commerce, practicing professions, and attending sports events.

Governments draw on nationalist ideas to justify their laws, control their citizens, wage their wars, and collect their revenues. Nationalism has thus contributed to much of the creativity and to much of the violence in modern history. National identities express a perennial human desire to belong to social groups, but the distinctive characteristics of modern nationalist politics and cultures have only emerged over the last three centuries.

Nationalism's Political Ideas and the Development of Modern National Governments

Nationalist ideologies claim that individual human identities embody an essential connection to large groups of people who share specific geographical territories, particular languages, unique political and cultural

institutions, significant historical memories, and (perhaps) similar religious beliefs or ethnic traits. Although various nationalisms propose very different ideas about how to organize government institutions or promote cultural traditions, they almost always seek to establish political states that will defend a “national territory” and protect a “national population.” Nationalism provides abstract theories and emotional commitments that link political institutions to the cultures they govern and the individual citizens they control. This combination of political power, cultural traditions, and personal identities often evokes strong human emotions because it connects nationalism to families and daily life within the geographical space of well-bounded national territories and within the historical time of widely narrated national memories.

Nationalism thus evolves through the interplay of political and cultural ideas that explain how a person’s well-being and identity depend on citizenship in a nation. These closely connected political and cultural dimensions of national life and individual identity lead most scholarly analysts to describe nationalism as an outgrowth of modern political institutions and cultural systems rather than an expression of ancient or primordial human communities. Nationalist accounts of specific nations, however, often refer to long-existing traditions or identities because such histories demonstrate how each nation both resembles and differs from other nations. Every nationalism resembles others when it claims to represent a sovereign population, unique culture, and collective history, but every nationalism also asserts its difference from other nations because the emphasis on national differences justifies the creation of independent national states, all of which establish cultural and political boundaries to separate insiders from outsiders and claim the sovereign right to protect the collective interests of their national populations.

The history of nationalism as a political and cultural theory is usually traced to eighteenth-century writers in Europe and America who began to argue that independent states should govern clearly bounded territories and embody the sovereignty of large populations rather than the sovereignty of kings or the privileges of nobles. Nationalism therefore became an influential idea in the “modernizing” political, cultural, social, and economic processes that gradually replaced older social hierarchies and

transformed the “subjects” of sovereign kings into the “citizens” of sovereign nations. Although nationalism produced new forms of political and social exclusion, nationalist theories usually promoted “horizontal” conceptions of equal legal rights for individual male citizens rather than older “vertical” social systems that granted different rights to legally defined social groups.

This concept of equal legal rights (for white men) attracted growing popular support in late eighteenth-century America and France, and the French revolutionary movement after 1789 became especially influential in defining a modern political community that expressed both the sovereignty and the will of a large national population. French radicals eventually justified the overthrow of the long-ruling Bourbon monarchy by arguing that sovereignty comes entirely from the people of a nation and that sovereign nations (as well as the individuals who live in them) have fundamental rights to liberty and equality. These arguments for national sovereignty and human rights drew on the ideas of writers such as John Locke, Charles-Louis Montesquieu, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau who had challenged the traditional theory that kings ruled by divine right. Eighteenth-century political theorists increasingly argued that legitimate governments rested on a “contract” with the people they governed, which meant that the “people” became the ultimate source of national sovereignty. The people could only exercise their sovereign power, however, when they were free from external control and protected by an autonomous government. Rousseau and other theorists thus contributed to the new idea of national sovereignty by imagining that each sovereign state would implement the “general will” of a national population and that the national state’s sovereign existence would take on the legitimating “divine” qualities that earlier generations had ascribed to God and kings.

Although this evolving contractual view of the state and its citizens did not necessarily mean that people would have more personal freedom, the late eighteenth-century definitions of national sovereignty soon became linked to new ideas about individual human rights. Enlightenment-era beliefs in human reason suggested that autonomous individuals, like the autonomous nations to which they belonged, should be free to pursue the truth in religion, science, or politics. The political revolutions in America and

France thus extended the new theories of sovereign national rights into declarations about individual rights and liberties, thereby setting up a tension between the possibly competing rights of nations and the rights of individuals. In fact, the new nationalist argument for the sovereign rights of autonomous nations often overwhelmed the parallel arguments for the rights and freedoms of autonomous individuals. The nationalist theory nevertheless pointed toward a reciprocal exchange in which the nation would protect the rights of individuals and the individual would defend the rights of the sovereign nation; and the two kinds of rights would be integrated into the lives of individual citizens. As people gained freedom from older hierarchies that had prescribed their inescapable place in political and social systems, nationalism and the nation-state would provide new ideologies and institutions to assure their continuing connection to a larger, coherent social community.

Nationalism and individualism therefore evolved as related but sometimes conflicting theories of human rights. The “nation” could offer new political integration for societies whose monarchs had lost legitimacy and whose individuals no longer lived within a carefully delineated social hierarchy. Nationalism emerged in this changing historical context as a new cultural foundation to support modern political regimes that could range from popular democracies to the most repressive dictators (who also portrayed their regimes as embodiments of the nation’s sovereign will).

Nationalisms frequently invoked the “national past,” but their historical role in the various transitions to modernity gave nationalists a strong interest in the future. Nationalist movements since the eighteenth century have therefore usually sought to separate their ideas and actions from “old regime” institutions that seemed to impede the nation’s political freedom or the exercise of individual rights. The modern belief that every nation must have its own state carried accompanying expectations for a better national future. This theme emerged in the early nationalisms of North America and France, and it became a common assumption in the many other European and non-European nationalisms that claimed to represent the political aspirations of specific national populations, defend the human rights of freedom and legal equality, and guide their societies toward a stronger, freer era of national history. Although human rights were often violated in the

early national states, the American and French *theories* of national sovereignty and human rights gained wide influence through the American Declaration of Independence (1776) and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (1789). These famous documents described national and human rights with universalizing concepts that could be reaffirmed in different ways by later national movements throughout Europe, South America, Asia, and Africa.

Nationalism has thus shaped anticolonial movements against every empire and has generated numerous political struggles for secession or regional autonomy among self-conscious social groups within multicultural nations on every continent. Acting on the fundamental idea that governments must represent a particular national population, nationalist movements have emerged wherever political activists believed that their language, cultural traditions, local institutions, and economic interests differed from the culture and interests of an “alien” governing class or colonial power. This much-desired convergence of language, culture, and political power became a fundamental goal for late-nineteenth-century nationalist movements in places such as the Austrian and Russian empires of eastern Europe; and similar aspirations reappeared constantly among the colonized people who launched nationalist revolutions against European imperial systems in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. The struggle to achieve both political and cultural autonomy thus became a common historical theme in the postcolonial societies that emerged from the collapse of transnational empires, but the complex interaction of politics and culture has also shaped all national identities—no matter how they may be defined as “old” or “new” in the history of nationalism.

Nationalism and Modern Public Cultures

Nationalist political leaders and national governments have attracted enduring popular support by promoting cultural themes and public rituals that teach people how to be national citizens. Nationalist cultural institutions have thus diffused new views of national sovereignty and human rights through the languages and symbols of national political discourses that can spread across national territories more quickly and effectively than national armies or bureaucracies. Schools, religious

organizations, and the modern culture industry have helped to instill national identities among the people of America, Europe, and every other place where nationalism became the ideological foundation for modern governments. The political nationalism that emerged in the French Revolution, for example, replaced the symbols and rituals that had long supported the French monarchy and launched the kinds of national, cultural campaigns that would reappear often in later nationalisms. The French created new clothing and songs to bring national, republican political themes into everyday life, and they introduced new public festivals, monuments, artwork, plays, “liberty trees,” liberty caps, and tricolor cockades to symbolize a regenerated French nation in which older images of saints and kings gave way to images of “Marianne,” a female symbol of the new republican state. National rituals conveyed a new political catechism that encouraged people to view the bonds among national citizens like the bonds within a family.

The French revolutionaries also promoted the unifying use of the French language, thereby establishing an influential linguistic theme that later nationalist movements and national states would repeat in their own campaigns to achieve political unity and independence. Although this linguistic emphasis became especially prominent in the later nationalist movements of central and eastern Europe, the public cultures of all nationalist groups have usually praised the political and cultural significance of a shared language. When people speak different languages, nationalists argue, they also express different ideas, develop different institutions, and eventually want different national governments. Nationalisms thus depend on a strong, living language, and each nation’s cultural influence and identity has required the constant work of national-minded authors and artists. Literature, history, and art showed how previous generations had sacrificed for the nation and contributed to the universal progress of humanity. Philosophers, poets, novelists, and historians have narrated the cultural meaning of nations for people who might never read the official declarations of political leaders, and nationalist “missionaries” have established new schools in even the most remote small towns to teach the national language and transform older forms of local identity. All nationalist movements have set out to “nationalize” the education and cultural knowledge of students and other young people.

Nationalism has also flowed into cultural life through newspapers, books, pamphlets, journals, maps, films, and radio or television broadcasts that placed people within national territories and linked their daily experiences to the ongoing history of a nation. Famous literary works and philological studies explained the distinctive history of words in national languages, and historians described historical continuities that linked current and past generations, stressing ancestral sacrifices to explain why and how the living must honor the dead through an unbending support for the nation. Histories of national sacrifice have thus tended to fuse the story of the nation and its heroes with older religious narratives about morality and sacrifice. Indeed, the calls for national service and sacrifice have often resembled ancient injunctions to serve a transcendent Being, and the rewards for such service have suggested new forms of salvation.

More people have died for their nations in modern times than for any other creed or political idea, which may explain why the modern identification with national symbols has frequently conveyed the kind of deep reverence that people express for their religious ideals. Like the sacred ceremonies of the world's ancient religions, nationalism's public cultural rituals provide collective and personal consolations for violence, sacrifice, and death. Although nations are not eternal, the ongoing existence of national communities has given modern people the comforting assurance that they are permanently connected to a greater power that exists long before and after the life of every individual. Duty to the nation could therefore be compared to a believer's duty to God because service to the nation advanced a sacred national mission. Drawing on religious conceptions of a "chosen people," nationalists have often believed that their nations were divinely called to promote a distinctive, moral cause in world history. Indeed, some "messianic nationalisms" in nineteenth-century Poland, Italy, and other European societies compared the struggles of their national populations to the sufferings of Christ and affirmed that recompense for this suffering would come in a national resurrection and future freedom for all who shared the pains of foreign occupation, political oppression, or lonely exile.

Even non-messianic nationalisms, however, have developed cultural analogs for traditional religious symbols, books, rituals, saints, holidays,

and moral lessons. The national flag of each national movement, for example, quickly became a sacred symbol, and nationalists praised their founding national documents with the reverence that religious leaders have always brought to ancient religious texts. Every nationalism celebrates virtuous “Founding Fathers” whose lives express the meaning of the nation, much as Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed conveyed the message or meaning of God. Nationalists have long made neo-religious pilgrimages to the birthplaces or tombs of national heroes, the sites of famous battles, and the graves of unknown soldiers. Christian accounts of Christ’s ultimate sacrifice for others offered a model for those many Western nationalists who found divine meaning in the modern causes of their nations. Christ-like images of sacrifice provided powerful European and American examples of what patriots and their families might ultimately have to give to their nations. The many soldiers and others who lost their lives to save the nation became the most hallowed figures in every nationalist ideology, and they were assured an earthly immortality in the collective national memory that preserved their language, ideas, and institutions. This nationalist emphasis on honorable sacrifices suggests how nationalism could transform warfare into the highest expression of national identity. The nation’s unity and ultimate survival depended on people who gave their lives in the struggles against national enemies, and soldiers became the highest embodiment of the national ideal because they died to give life and freedom to others. Nationalist ideologies have thus offered consoling explanations for death and moral justifications for the nation’s most violent public actions. But the emotionally charged themes of modern nationalism have also extended from government institutions, public cultural symbols, historical narratives, and neo-religious conceptions of sacrifice into the social relationships and family networks that shape and sustain all personal identities.

Nationalism, Gender, Family, and Race

Nationalism gained pervasive political and cultural influence when modern people began to include nationality among the main attributes of a personal identity, much like they referred to a person’s gender, family heritage, or race. Although national identities have often been viewed as inherited and natural, they are constructed through cultural processes that also shape an individual’s other “natural” identities. As modern institutions and identities

became increasingly “nationalized” during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the meaning of both gender and race became entwined with nationalist ideas that connected the personal spheres of individual lives with the public spheres of politics and collective cultural identities. These connections appeared in modern ideas about the family, reproduction, and personal respectability, which suggested that a “good citizen” was also a responsible member of a family (and vice versa). Ideas and anxieties about the family also overlapped with ideologies that claimed to show the biological meaning of race, and nationalism’s evolving view of human identities frequently referred to bodies as well as history.

Nationalist writings used metaphorical language to evoke emotional responses to the “fatherland,” “mother tongue” and “mother country,” “brothers-in-arms,” “founding fathers,” and the “national family.” Nationalisms have also developed male or female symbols to represent their national virtues. The meaning of England, for example, has often been conveyed in images of Britannia and John Bull; the Germans represented themselves with Germania; the Americans created Uncle Sam; and the famous “Marianne” symbolized France’s national virtue long after the French Revolution.

Most nationalists have therefore assumed that various gendered virtues and a firm loyalty to biological families provided a solid grounding for strong nations and a deep commitment to the nation provided coherence and continuity for strong families. The family resembled the school as an institution that could shape the national identities and commitments of young citizens. This view of the family’s nationalizing influence assigned a key national role to women because mothers were supposed to ensure the national identity of their children. Yet the woman’s essential national role actually began with the production of babies, which nationalists traditionally portrayed as a “passive” or “immutable” element of national societies that contrasted with the “active,” changing male duties in the nation’s public life. These gender themes in nationalist thought typically made women responsible for the enduring moral virtues that respectable families and nations passed on to their children. Nationalists have often described children as the pure embodiment of national virtues (along with

soldiers), and images of parents surrounded by their happy children formed a common theme in popular artistic representations of national virtues.

The biological themes in nationalist writings about families also influenced much of the nationalist concern with race. Although racial nationalisms lost respectability in most societies as people reacted against the genocidal violence of modern racist regimes such as Nazi Germany, nationalists in earlier eras often believed that so-called “racial traits” explained national differences in political and cultural institutions. Nineteenth-century nationalists in Britain and the United States, for example, referred to the “Anglo-Saxon” racial identity when they added biological categories to a list of distinctive national identities that included the cultural traditions of history, literature, and religion. In addition, nationalist thought in many countries promoted anti-Semitism or European imperial control of different “races” in Africa and Asia. The allegedly natural attributes of “race” nevertheless had to be cultivated in homes and schools, so that young people would understand how their “biologically shaped” gender roles and racial identities merged with the history of their nations. Domestic education therefore brought family life, moral virtues, and individual identities into the political and cultural life of the nation—and brought national histories into personal histories from early childhood until death.

Debates About Nationalism

Scholarly debates about nationalism have long reflected the national contexts in which the writers lived. Many of the early analysts and historians of nationalist ideas, for example, wrote national histories that described coherent, sovereign national states as the culminating political organization of long-existing social groups and collective identities. Recent scholarship, however, has generally portrayed nationalism as a distinctively modern political and cultural theory whose main components emerged with the rise of modern economies, centralizing political states, mass communication systems, and public education. This influential “constructivist” argument emphasizes the linguistic, ideological, economic, and neo-religious construction of nationalist states and cultures, but it continues to elicit criticism from “ethno-symbolist” theorists and “primordialists” who stress that no nationalist movement or identity can

develop without preexisting linguistic, cultural, historical, ethnic, religious, or social communities that sustain identity-shaping traditions and memories. Critics of the “constructionist approach” assume that nationalism’s exceptional political and cultural power cannot simply be “invented” or “imagined” because the emotional components of a national identity run very deep in the collective experience of any group that claims to be a “nation.”

In addition to the debates about the constructed or primordial aspects of nationalism, other arguments focus on the contrasting political or cultural themes in various nationalisms. Many historians distinguish between civic nationalisms (theoretically open to anyone who accepts the nation’s political ideas and institutions) and ethnic nationalisms (open only to those persons who embody a particular racial or ethnic identity). Accounts of civic and ethnic nationalisms often lead to arguments about “good” or “bad” nationalisms, and ethnic nationalisms are usually described as the bad ideologies that produced most of the racism, anti-Semitism, political oppression, ethnic cleansing, and warfare in modern world history. Other studies compare the traditional nationalist quest for “pure” or “fully coherent” national societies with a more recent multiculturalism that emphasizes the cultural diversity within all modern societies. Scholarly “culture wars” have erupted between those who condemn multiculturalism and those who argue that the inevitable differences within a nation will always block the nationalist aspiration for a “pure,” culturally unified national community.

Other scholars compare the nationalisms of long-established nation-states with the nationalisms of recently established, postcolonial nation-states to argue that nationalism is now less important for older governments than for newer national governments. Debates about the differences in older and newer nationalisms or “western” and “eastern” nationalisms also lead to questions about how globalizing economic forces and cultural systems may significantly weaken national government and nationalist identities. Despite the growing challenges of transnational economic, cultural, and technological changes, however, the beliefs in national sovereignty and national cultures continue to shape politics and personal identities almost everywhere.

Scholarly debates about whether nationalism is constructed or primordial, civic or ethnic, good or bad, and coherent or multicultural (and so forth) typically move from these broad theoretical claims to arguments about the specific components of nationalism: political and cultural institutions, economic systems, social life, and the ideas about religion, gender, language or ethnicity that shape nationalist ideologies. The opposing sides in each debate inevitably emphasize diverging political or cultural themes to support their general assessments of nationalism's significance, value, or danger. Furthermore, every generation encounters new nationalist violence and ideas that provoke new scholarly analysis and debates. The future scholarship on nationalism and the future political consequences of nationalist thought are therefore unpredictable, but the history of nationalism's far-reaching political and cultural influence suggests that it will surely remain a powerful force in modern states, international conflicts, and personal identities.

Lloyd Kramer

See also [Cosmopolitanism](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Empire and Political Thought](#); [Ethnicity and Political Thought](#); [French Revolution, Political Thought of the](#); [General Will](#); [Humanitarian Intervention](#); [International Relations Theory and Political Thought](#); [Modernization](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Revolution](#); [Republicanism](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Race and Racism](#); [Romanticism](#); Social Contract; [Sovereignty](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [United Nations, Theories of the](#)

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***See* Marx, Karl; Property, Theories of; Social Democracy; Socialism; Welfare State, Theories of the**

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Natural Law

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Natural Law

The notion of a natural law that governs all human beings throughout the globe and provides a standard for ethical behavior in all parts of the world has been a persistent feature of ethical thought from ancient times to the present. This entry discusses the evolution of natural law and its relevance to contemporary issues, and then considers some current empirical confirmations.

In the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, attempts were made to define key precepts of the *lex naturalis* (law of nature). Thomas Aquinas (1225–74), summarizing the efforts of prior philosophers and Roman jurists, focused on three pivotal inclinations of human nature, which superseded other inclinations and had the force of law:

1. the law of self-preservation, which humans have in common with all beings in the world;
2. the law of procreation and care for offspring, which humans have in common with animals; and
3. the law specific to rational beings to search for the truth and to organize social structures in reasonable and harmonious ways.

These precepts were expanded and reformulated by later scholastics in the Catholic tradition. The Spanish Dominicans Francisco de Vitoria (1492–1546) and Bartolomé de las Casas (1474–1566), responding to problems connected with colonizations and conquests in the Americas, developed

principles of the natural rights of indigenous peoples, as corollaries to natural law theory.

From the eighteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century, natural law theory became subject to criticism from a number of quarters. Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832), champion of a utilitarian approach to morality and politics, dismissed natural law as overly vague and subject to subjective and self-interested manipulations. David Hume (1711–76) argued against the tendency of moralists to derive an *ought* (duty) from an *is* (external fact); and numerous subsequent ethicists, considering “human nature” to be something merely existent and factual, considered natural law theory to be invalidated by Hume’s stricture. In the nineteenth century, Darwinists’ extension of the theory of physical evolution to social developments and the idea of evolving species, raised questions about any “constants” in human nature; and the Marxian connection of morality with political and economic relations portrayed ethics itself as historically determined, no longer regarded as an autonomous discipline.

In the mid-twentieth century, certain events led to a rethinking concerning the relevance and importance of natural law. First, the Nuremberg Trials of 1945 to 1946 in the aftermath of World War II, in which jurists from allied countries were engaged in judging “war crimes” by German officials whose actions were often legal under the then-prevailing Nazi government, raised questions about justification. Were the Nuremberg judgments of execution and imprisonment justified simply because of the fact that the judges belonged to the victorious countries? Or was there some higher law that could serve as a criterion for condemning certain civil laws and actions carried out in conformity with these laws? Second, when unprecedented advances in medical contraceptive technology in the 1960s led to the 1968 Encyclical Letter, *humanae vitae*, of Pope Paul VI, condemning artificial birth control and countenancing only natural family planning, critical discussion of the natural law regarding reproduction ensued. One result was the development by Germain Grisez and John Finnis of a “new natural law” theory, allegedly immune to Humean criticisms, and based on a set of presumably universal basic values. Finally, in the last few decades, natural law has been invoked in condemnation of genocide in Rwanda and Sudan.

In addition to philosophical arguments for the existence and validity of a natural law, two primarily empirical validations should be noted: Since the existence of a “right” implies a corresponding duty to respect that right and since broad agreement of the nations of the world produced the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations in 1948, the natural rights included in that document (e.g., the right to life, the right to marry, the right to education and to a reasonable social order) would entail corresponding natural obligations. Likewise, anthropological corroborations of ethical universals in all societies, such as Donald Brown’s discovery of prohibitions of murder, rape, incest, and child abandonment in all societies, offer empirical support to the concept of natural law.

Howard Kainz

See also [English Enlightenment](#); [International Law](#); [Rights, Civil](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#)

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Negri, Antonio

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Antonio Negri (1933–) is an Italian revolutionary political theorist who is influenced by Marxism yet critiques Karl Marx's ideas. Negri attends to social developments after Marx and contemporary political practice. At the outset of his academic career, Negri read Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and post-Kantian philosophy, which is reflected in his Ph.D. thesis (1956) and his first publication, *State and Right in the Young Hegel*. Negri read Hegel sympathetically in seeing the potential of dialectic as an open reflexive technique that could trace interconnections of theory and practice.

While a professor in Padua in the 1950s, he was a member of the Italian Socialist Party (PSI). He engaged seriously with Marx in the 1960s, and in 1963, he co-founded the left-wing political group Potere Operaio (Worker's Power), which supported workers' activism and direct acts of resistance to capital. In the early 1970s, he worked with the decentralized extra-parliamentary movement Autonomia Operaia (Workers' Autonomy), writing pamphlets and supporting workerism, the notion that workers could directly develop their own power and effectiveness. This self-valorization of workers and his recognition of changing social and economic conditions were distinctive aspects of his brand of Marxism. He observed how work had changed, with large-scale factory production declining in significance, and how distinctive issues of gender and ethnicity were on the contemporary agenda. The rise of Leninist military organizations such as the Red Brigades led to the murder of the Prime Minister Aldo Moro in 1978 and to a subsequent wave of repression. Negri was arrested for his

alleged role in fomenting violence. After his temporary release from prison in 1983, he fled to France, where he remained until 1997 when he returned to Italy and served the rest of his prison sentence until 2003.

Negri's critical Marxism embraced a critique of a universal measure of value that was set out in his text, *Marx Beyond Marx*, where he drew on the *Grundrisse*'s conception of the creativity of social labor. In recent years, Negri has joined with Michael Hardt to write important radical texts that depart from Marx in drawing on the practice of contemporary activism. These works, *Empire* (2000), *Multitude* (2004), and *Commonwealth* (2009), are ambitious in imagining revolution for a global age and in offering a social theory that critiques and absorbs a number of historical theorists including Baruch Spinoza, Hegel, Marx, Gilles Deleuze, Michel Foucault, and Niccolò Machiavelli. These texts repudiate standard notions of revolutionary change and working-class militancy, breaking with hierarchical conceptions of revolution, standard images of an industrial working class, and the idea of a radical party as a top-down agent of revolutionary change.

For Hardt and Negri, revolt is to be undertaken by the many, who are repressed—the multitude, a heterogeneous set of people whose commonality is their repression by Empire and their potential for creativity. Empire is the global power under contemporary conditions of capital, where power is not linked to particular states but to the processes of power exerted across the globe. The potential for revolutionary change is not linked to critique and elite insurrectionary action but exists immanently across the channels of bio-power. Crucially, these emerge from the common, which is revealed in *Commonwealth* to be the shared social connections and powers that the multitude enjoy, that supersede the narrow confines of production formally controlled by capital, and that are typically measured by the labor theory of value. The shared powers of the common are those powers that militate against the continuation of capital and drive the possibilities of radical change.

Negri is a challenging theorist who maintains that revolution is both necessary and will arise out of immanent global developments. His reading of this prospective change, though, is held to be nondialectical and

nonteleological, although its claims about the future and its links with the past appear to revisit classic dialectical themes.

Gary K. Browning

See also [Communism, Varieties of](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Empire and Political Thought](#); [Globalization](#); [Hegelianism](#); [Italian Political Thought](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Revolution](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Neoconservatism

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Neoconservatism

Neoconservatism is a form of conservative thought that is particular, although not exclusive, to the United States. The term was introduced by socialist activist-academic Michael Harrington in 1973, referring pejoratively to a particular group of American intellectuals who had moved from the radical left to the right in the 1960s. Although the group turned out to be ideologically eclectic and individually fluid, with people moving into and out of it, the term stuck to a growing collection of members and institutions.

The term *neoconservatism* became widely used in the 1980s, describing the governments of Ronald Reagan in the United States and Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom. In the late 1980s, various commentators declared the death of neoconservatism, and the term saw little use in the 1990s. This hiatus changed dramatically when President George W. Bush ordered the invasion of Iraq, an action widely seen as a move prompted by neoconservatives (now often called “neocons” for short) in his administration. In particular, deputy secretary of defense Paul Wolfowitz’s doctrine of preventive invasion came to be known as the Bush Doctrine. In the post-Bush era, many neoconservatives have either denounced their former ideas or denied their influence within the administration. Some of the most prominent neoconservatives have even denied the very existence of neoconservatism. But although neoconservatism is once again declared dead, its most prominent individuals and institutions remain influential within the U.S. right.

What Is Neoconservatism?

Although the term *neoconservatism* is now broadly used in academic and nonacademic discourse, few clear definitions exist. In fact, the bare essence of neoconservatism is debated. Is it an ideology? Is it really conservative? (No, says populist Catholic conservative Patrick Buchanan [2004].) Does it exist at all? Irving Kristol, the unofficial “godfather” of neoconservatism, famously described neoconservatives as “liberals mugged by reality.” Probably the most popular self-definition within the movement, this one is both vague and not, or no longer, accurate.

Most authors, academic or nonacademic, use the term *neoconservatism* to denote a movement of intellectuals who share a common ideology. Exactly who belongs to the movement and what constitutes the ideology, however, often remains unmentioned or vague. Although certain intellectuals and institutions seem beyond dispute (e.g., Irving Kristol and *The Weekly Standard*), the inclusion of others is debated or limited to certain time periods (e.g., social scientist Daniel Bell or politician Daniel Moynihan). Many neoconservatives themselves have long been unwilling to accept the term, but even those who do self-ascribe as neoconservatives problematize its meaning and usage. They argue that the neoconservative movement, if it exists at all, is deeply divided over almost all key issues and cannot be said to share a clear ideology. Hence, they speak of neoconservatism in terms of a “persuasion” (Kristol), a “tendency” (Norman Podhoretz), or even a “sensibility” (Joshua Muravchik).

In ideological terms, neoconservatism can be defined as a combination of neoliberal economics, social traditionalism, and democratic interventionism. Neoconservatives believe that the market is the best economic system, but its optimal functioning depends on the spread of specific virtues in society. The state has a key role to play in the fostering and protecting of these virtues (e.g., self-discipline and personal responsibility). Finally, neoconservatives want to make the world in general, and their own country in particular, safe for democratic capitalism by aggressively supporting it in the world.

However, this definition borders on a Weberian ideal type, as many self-ascribed neoconservatives do not support all three ideological features to the same extent. For example, Jeane Kirkpatrick, former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, fit the neoconservative definition in terms of her stands on foreign policy stands; yet she held fairly liberal social views. Even Irving Kristol has at times expressed doubts about aspects of this neoconservative agenda, while at other times embracing them. For example, up until the 1980s, he argued that foreign policy was irrelevant to neoconservatism.

Neoconservatism combines key aspects of all three main tenets of postwar American conservatism. The two share the belief in the market with libertarians, the importance of virtue with traditionalists, and the active fight against foreign leftist dictatorships with anticommunists. This similarity notwithstanding, neoconservatives have always been distrusted by other conservatives (see below).

The First Generation (c. 1960s-80s)

The origins of the neoconservative movement are to be found in a group of Trotskyist graduate students at City College of New York in the 1930s. Mostly children of poor Jewish immigrants, they engaged in fierce debates with their Stalinist colleagues in the City College cafeteria. Over the next few decades, the group, which included prominent social scientists like Daniel Bell and intellectuals such as Irving Kristol, would slowly but steadily drift to the right. Becoming staunch anticommunists, most neocons remained self-described Democrats until the late 1970s.

During the 1960s, the neocons grew increasingly critical of and disappointed with the Democratic Party and liberalism. They believed that the party had been overtaken by radicals, and they decried its soft position against communism both in the United States and abroad as well as its critical position toward Israel, a stance they held to be informed by anti-Semitism. They allied with liberal hawks such as Senator Henry “Scoop” Jackson (D-WA), whose young staff included many future leaders of the second generation of neoconservatives, including Bush officials Paul Wolfowitz and Richard Perle.

At the beginning, however, the neoconservative movement concerned itself mainly with domestic affairs. In 1965, Bell and Kristol founded *The Public Interest*, a journal that published critical analyses of liberal policies, mostly regarding welfare and affirmative action, by famous social scientists like Nathan Glazer and James Q. Wilson (both at Harvard) or Aaron Wildavsky (University of California at Berkeley). Unlike traditional conservatives, the neoconservative based their critiques on solid social science and emphasized the unintended consequences of state policies. They believed in the importance of ideas for politics and preferred a career as an intellectual over that of a politician. A key element of their ideology has been the importance of virtue, heavily influenced by the work on Victorian England by historian Gertrude Himmelfarb (Kristol's wife). According to the neoconservatives, virtue underlies both democracy and the market and should be protected and encouraged by the state.

In the 1970s, the neoconservatives increasingly moved away from the Democratic Party and extended increasingly beyond their urban, Jewish, former-Trotskyist base. Their relationship with the traditional right remained strained, and the movement's most prominent "converts" were liberal hawks from the Democratic Party such as Jeane Kirkpatrick (then a faculty member at Georgetown University) and politician Daniel Patrick Moynihan (New York), although the latter openly broke with the neocons soon after. The movement embraced the free market even more strongly and increasingly stressed the need for a strong anticommunist stand inside and outside of the United States. In 1985, Kristol founded *The National Interest*, which dealt primarily with foreign affairs. Until then, *Commentary*, the official magazine of the American Jewish Committee, edited by prominent neocon Norman Podhoretz, had been the major outlet for neoconservative foreign-policy analyses.

Ronald Reagan was the first Republican President to be largely and openly supported by the neoconservatives. Although the Reagan administration was broadly perceived as the high point of neoconservative power, at least until the presidency of George W. Bush, few neoconservatives held prominent positions within the administration, and many grew increasingly disappointed with Reagan. In the late 1980s, with the election of the moderate realist George H. W. Bush, the neoconservatives disappeared

from the public eye, and both friends and foes proclaimed its demise. For example, in 1996, *Commentary* published an essay titled “Neoconservatism: A Eulogy,” written by none other than Podhoretz himself.

The Second Generation (Since the 1990s)

Although declared dead in the mid-1980s, neoconservatism came back with a vengeance in the early twenty-first century. Obviously, it had never truly disappeared; rather, it had left the administration and returned to its journals and think tanks. However, although first-generation neoconservatives such as Irving Kristol and Norman Podhoretz remained influential, it was their sons and daughters, like William Kristol and John Podhoretz, who became the leaders of the second generation, in part through their influential publication, *The Weekly Standard*. The second generation of neocons differs in important ways from their parents. First, they did not go through a left-wing phase. Second, they are much more partisan than their fathers.

Although, like the first generation, many work for journals and think tanks, most are openly aligned with and involved in the Republican Party. A good example is Bill Kristol, who worked as Chief of Staff for William Bennett, Secretary of Education in the Reagan administration, and Dan Quayle, Vice President in the George H. W. Bush administration. Unlike many other second-generation neoconservatives, Kristol did not get involved in the George W. Bush administration, but he did function as foreign-policy advisor to the 2008 Republican presidential nominee, Senator John McCain, and his running mate, Sarah Palin.

A third aspect in which the second generation differs from their intellectual fathers is in the radicalism of their foreign policy. Not only is foreign policy their key concern, overshadowing economic and particularly social concerns, but they are also much more visionary in their goals and militant in their means. Although the first generation was anticommunist and demanded strength abroad and at home, most early neocons shied away from military and interventionist policies. Moreover, they had an innate skepticism toward the possibility of externally enforced regime change. The second generation also supported the extensive buildup of the military, and the increased vigilance toward internal threats, but also in addition pushed

for an interventionist foreign policy, unilateral and military if necessary. Particularly under the Bill Clinton administration, neoconservative organizations like the “Project for a New American Century” (PNAC) would push for a significant increase in the defense budget and for military intervention and regime change in countries like Bosnia-Herzegovina and Iraq.

Neoconservatism and the Iraq War

Although George W. Bush was elected on a platform of “compassionate conservatism,” which had little to say on foreign policy, his administration will forever be linked to neoconservatism. In fact, throughout his term, relatively few neocons served in the Bush administration. However, taken by surprise by the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the few, strategically placed neocons were able to define the response to the new threat, with the strong support of Vice President Dick Cheney.

The PNAC’s report “Rebuilding Defenses: Strategy, Forces and Resources For a New Century” (2000) functioned as the blueprint of the Bush administration’s response to 9/11. The neoconservative foreign policy, also referred to as “hard Wilsonianism” (Max Boot) or “Wilsonianism on steroids” (Walter Russell Mead), was built on the assumption that the United States and its allies were safest in a world of democracies. Its two main goals were (1) to extend the “unipolar moment” (Charles Krauthammer), i.e., American hegemony, as long as possible; and (2) to exercise benevolent hegemony, i.e., to use American power to advance the cause of democratic capitalism throughout the world. As neocons traditionally distrust international organizations like the United Nations, which it sees as dominated by nondemocratic, socialist-leaning, and anti-Israel/U.S. regimes, the United States was to achieve its goals unilaterally and militarily, if necessary. Key to the invasion of Iraq, long envisioned by neoconservative Paul Wolfowitz, was the belief that regime change in that country would lead to a domino effect, democratizing the whole region, making it and the world safer for the United States and its allies, notably, Israel.

This agenda notwithstanding, most neoconservatives left the administration soon after the invasion and turned increasingly critical of Bush's war efforts. They believed that the administration had deployed too few troops, a deficiency primarily blamed on Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, and they were embittered that Bush was unwilling to act more forcefully against Iran. Moreover, the administration's increasing overtures to the international community were heavily criticized by neocon analysts, as well as by their main remaining ally in the administration, Vice President Cheney.

Neoconservatism and the Right

There is a paradox in neoconservatism's relationship with the larger conservative movement: Although it integrates the main tenets of American conservatism, it is considered to be not truly conservative by many on the right. Many neoconservatives believe that there are two key reasons for the hostile reception they have received within the larger conservative movement: their left-wing origins and their Jewish predominance. Another reason may be their essentially intellectual nature, which breaks with the rather strong anti-intellectual tradition of the American right.

Various conservatives give a more fundamental reason for their aversion to neoconservatism. They claim that neoconservatism is not really conservative. At first this seems a strange claim, given that neoconservatism integrates key aspects of the three tenets of postwar American conservatism (see above). However, the claim is not totally without merit. Most notably, neoconservatives do believe in reshaping society by state involvement, which is visible in their support of a "conservative welfare state" (Kristol), and they believe in enforced democratization and nation building. Their activist foreign policy stands in sharp opposition to the isolationism of at least two tenets of American conservatism, i.e., libertarianism and traditionalist or paleoconservatism.

Neoconservatism Outside the United States

There is no doubt that neoconservatism is a distinctly American movement. However, Irving Kristol's claim of American exceptionalism exaggerates the singularity of the American experience. There are actually neoconservatives outside of the United States, albeit primarily in America's closest allies. However, particularly in the British context, the terms "new conservatism" and "new right" were more prevalent than "neoconservatism," at least for the first generation.

The most important non-American representative of neoconservatism was Margaret Thatcher, Conservative British prime minister from 1979 to 1990, and a close ally of Ronald Reagan. Although not a neoconservative himself, Tony Blair, Labour prime minister from 1997 to 2007, supported much of the second generation's neoconservative foreign-policy agenda and is held in high esteem among American neoconservatives (one of his speeches is even included in *The Neocon Reader*, edited by neoconservative Irwin Stelzer). Outside of Britain, neoconservatism is mostly prominent within the Israeli mainstream right, notably, the Likud Party.

In addition, some non-American neoconservative intellectuals have received particular praise from the U.S. movement. For example, some American neoconservatives consider the French intellectual Jean-François Revel as one of the key founders of neoconservatism. Another relatively influential non-American thinker is the young British journalist Douglas Murray, author of *Neoconservatism: Why We Need It* (2005) and director of the think tank Centre for Social Cohesion, in London.

The Future of Neoconservatism

During the second term of the George W. Bush administration, many neoconservatives jumped ship, both from the administration and from neoconservatism as such. One of the first, and most prominent, defectors was political scientist Francis Fukuyama, whose disappointment with the Iraq War, which he had initially supported, led him to openly denounce neoconservatism and call for a new way. However, his proposed "realistic Wilsonianism" largely resembles the foreign policy of the neocons and differs primarily in means, not goals.

An even more unlikely defector is Richard Perle, Chairman of the Defense Policy Board Advisory Committee under Bush (2001–03), seen by many as a key neoconservative mastermind of the Iraq War. In a 2009 interview with *Vanity Fair*, the “Prince of Darkness” even went so far as to deny the very existence of neoconservatism. Similarly, other prominent neocons have argued that neoconservatism is a creation of the liberal media, and/or the far right, and contains strong anti-Semitic currents. In the words of neoconservative *New York Times* columnist David Brooks: “con is short for ‘conservative’ and neo is short for ‘Jewish’” (Brooks 2004).

Despite the recent obituaries, neoconservatism is far from dead. First of all, neocons were among the key advisors of all major Republican presidential candidates in 2008. Second, they can still rely on a broad and well-funded infrastructure of journals and think tanks. Third, their key values find a growing resonance within the larger American public, as surveys consistently show. That said, the recent Bush administration, and particularly the highly contentious Iraq War, have made the term *neoconservatism* a liability in future political debates. Hence, although the key ideological features will likely remain influential among the American right, they will probably be put forward under new terms, such as Fukuyama’s “realistic Wilsonianism” or William Kristol and Robert Kagan’s “national greatness conservatism.”

Cas Mudde

See also [American Political Thought](#); [Conservatism](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Friedman, Milton](#); [Globalization](#); [Hayek, Friedrich](#); [Humanitarian Intervention](#); [International Relations Theory and Political Thought](#); [Isolationism](#); [Liberalism](#); [Libertarianism](#); [Neoliberalism](#); [Power, State, Theories of the](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [United Nations, Theories of the](#); [War and Political Thought](#)

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Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism

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Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism is a variant of liberalism embracing the concepts of the free market, private property, constitutional order, and the minimal state. As an ideological and political project, neoliberalism became one of the most significant economic movements of the second half of the twentieth century, playing a central role in intellectual and policy discourses in Germany in the 1950s and in Britain and the United States in the 1970s and 1980s. After the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the early 1990s, neoliberalism came to reign as the “hegemonic” ideology for management of the global economy and construction of a new world order.

Variants of Liberalism

Neoliberalism has its roots in classical liberalism and the antimercantilism disseminated by classical economists such as Adam Smith, Thomas Malthus, and David Ricardo. Smith, in particular, is identified by modern neoliberals as one of the true founders of modern liberalism. His *The Wealth of Nations*, published in 1776, set out the founding principles of the liberal market economy. Smith’s metaphor of the “invisible hand” of the market is treated as a general claim that social well-being is maximized, unintentionally but efficiently, by the countless self-interested daily decisions taken by agents in free markets. These individual interests, Smith asserted, are naturally harmonious; under a system of free competition, the

operation of the market continually tends to produce prices as low as is consistent with supplying the product, while yielding a fair return on the effort expended in production. Wealth and social well-being, Smith argued, are generated through a process of market competition rather than by central governmental direction. Smith accorded the state a limited role in providing “public goods” such as defense and in administering justice. On this reading, Smith’s work represented one of the first attempts to develop an understanding of the principles of self-regulating markets and, as a result, still inspires much neoliberal theorizing on markets today.

The word *neoliberalism* itself was coined in the 1930s by the German economist Alexander Rüstow to distinguish the prevailing state-centered liberal ideas that had become dominant with Keynesianism from those of traditional liberalism. Rüstow’s neoliberalism attempted to provide a new understanding of the state, economy, and society within an ideological framework of traditional liberal tenets. His aim was both to modernize liberalism as an ideology and to meet the economic and political demands of the era—hence, the prefix *neo*. In the years during and immediately after World War II, one of the most influential advocates of these “neoliberal” ideas was the Austrian economist Friedrich von Hayek. The strong antisocialist views of his intellectual mentor and fellow member of the Austrian School, Ludwig von Mises, informed the corpus and ideological direction of Hayek’s work. Hayek’s *The Road to Serfdom*, published in 1944, argued that liberalism in the classical sense of the term had been driven out by socialism, which was irrevocably pushing Western civilization toward totalitarianism. Hayek was writing in a period when the classical liberalism of Smith and Ricardo had been ravaged by a worldwide depression in the 1930s, sandwiched by two world wars that fostered the advance of collectivist ideologies, in particular socialism. Hayek made the controversial claim that all forms of collectivism—even mild forms such as social democracy in postwar Britain—led inexorably toward the kind of National Socialism practiced in Nazi Germany under the Third Reich.

Consequently, Hayek was critical of the Keynesian budgetary techniques and social insurance and welfare programs adopted in Britain and the United States after World War II. He maintained that individual freedom and social progress could be guaranteed only by widespread participation in

market society. He saw the market as a spontaneous order that had naturally evolved without conscious human design. What made the spontaneous market order—or “catallaxy,” as Hayek termed it—superior was that, unlike the modern state, it was capable of coordinating the knowledge of private individuals in society, enabling them to pursue their own short-term objectives while unintentionally promoting the general economic and social good. Hayek saw the state as inefficient and corrupt, damaging the performance of national economies, and infringing on individual liberty.

Hayek did not, however, advocate a system of pure laissez-faire or libertarian capitalism with virtually no state intervention. Hayek’s fundamental concern, like that of his predecessor John Stuart Mill, was to draw up the proper boundaries of the state, whereby intervention was restricted to preventing private force and fraud while not itself becoming unjustifiably coercive. Hayek (1960) identified the proper functions of the neoliberal state as noninterventionist, as being restricted to an individualist minimum sanctioned in his *The Constitution of Liberty*. The state in Hayek’s market order had to be strong, yet minimal. It had to be a constitutional state capable of enforcing property rights, correcting market deficiencies, providing certain public goods, and guaranteeing individual liberty. The principle that determined the legitimacy of governmental activity for Hayek was *Rechtsstaat* (rule-of-law state). The *Rechtsstaat* is an instrument for the regulation of conflicting relations among autonomous individuals in market society. Its function is to secure social cohesion and stability through the preservation of individual liberties.

One of the most significant events in the intellectual development of neoliberalism was the founding of the Mont Pelerin Society (MPS) in 1947. This organization provided an important meeting ground for anticollectivist and “classical” liberal sympathizers. The neoliberals who formed the MPS were not just opposing the rise of socialism in national economies but also responding to the “new” interventionist variants within liberalism itself, such as the New Liberalism advocated by Thomas Hill Green, Leonard Trelawny Hobhouse, and John A. Hobson in Britain, and the liberal progressivism associated with Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal administration in the United States.

The MPS was an international forum advocating the “rebirth of liberalism” in the immediate years after World War II. The initial membership of the MPS by no means consisted only of classical liberals; rather it initially involved a diverse range of individuals who were broadly liberal in their views and who were critical of collectivism, which, they argued, threatened the foundations of civilized society. These intellectuals included Lionel Robbins and Karl Popper from the London School of Economics, the German liberal economist Wilhelm Röpke, and Milton Friedman from the University of Chicago. The origins of neoliberalism as a global ideology can be found in the formation of the MPS. Hayek and other sympathetic “liberals” not only distinguished themselves from other variants of liberalism but also redefined the ideological terrain. Like the Marxists of an earlier time, the Mont Pelerians constructed their own universalist utopia.

Neoliberalism and National Economic Policy

Although the Mont Pelerians made it explicit that it was not their intention to create a new political orthodoxy through the implementation of specific policies, the society’s network became an important source of ideas and inspiration in the construction of national economic policy programs in the postwar world, specifically in Germany, Britain, and the United States. It is against this background that the term “neoliberal” started to be more widely deployed to define a particular ideological stance within the liberal camp.

In Germany in the 1950s, neoliberals, or “ordoliberals” as they were termed, such as Rüstow, Röpke, and Walter Eucken influenced the policy proposals of the early Social Market Economy, which extolled the virtues of free competition, open markets, price stability, control of monopoly, and the enlightened *Rechtsstaat*. The aim of the founders of the German Social Market Economy was not to create an egalitarian system of redistribution but to develop an efficient and successful market economy with a social dimension—a limited safety net for the very poor—through which all individuals would benefit from an increase in the gross national product of the country through competition. After the experience of the Third Reich in power, the ordoliberals made it explicit that the idea of the Social Market Economy did not entail planning any socialist order but rather aimed to link market freedom and efficiency with a compensatory social system, while

retaining a maximum degree of individual freedom. This vision would later influence the New Right in Britain in the 1970s.

In Britain and the United States, the rise of neoliberalism as a policy paradigm in the 1970s was associated with the failure of Keynesian economic management and the onset of stagflation (an inflationary economic situation characterized by a decline in industrial output). Milton Friedman led the attack on Keynesianism, applying a radically free-market ideological stance to a range of public policies. His theory of monetarism rejected the Keynesian “trade off” between inflation and employment, claiming that inflation was a monetary phenomenon that could be controlled only by limiting the money supply according to a fixed rule.

In the 1980s, the governments of Margaret Thatcher in Britain and Ronald Reagan in the United States established the credibility of neoliberalism both as an ideology and as a political program. Neoliberalism became an important ideological component of the New Right. Free-market think tanks such as the Institute of Economic Affairs in Britain and the Hoover Institute in the United States became influential not only in disseminating the neoliberal ideas of Hayek and Friedman but also in turning them into practical policy proposals. Neoliberalism in Britain and America emphasized the need for two institutions: the free economy and the strong state. This combination entailed the introduction of policy prescriptions that were compatible with free-market principles such as monetarism, competition, privatization, deregulation, reduced taxation, and welfare spending, as well as the curbing of trade-union power. Similar policy programs of privatization and deregulation have been adopted in Chile, Slovakia, New Zealand, and even contemporary “communist” China.

The last decades of the twentieth century witnessed a fundamental transformation of the world economy. For neoliberals, the end of communist rule in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet republics in the late 1980s and early 1990s vindicated the primacy of the market and private property. For them the collapse of communism in this region discredited not only the command economy but also milder forms of socialism. Policies to reconstruct capitalism in the developing world under the tutelage of the Washington-based World Bank and International Monetary Fund

institutions constitute what has become popularly known as the “Washington Consensus.”

Globalization and the State

Contemporary globalization of American capitalism, it is argued, has disseminated neoliberalism across the planet. Some critics of neoliberalism contend that the ideology has been imposed throughout the world by powerful global economic institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization (WTO). These critics present neoliberalism as the ideological basis of a global consumer society and the growing inequalities associated with it. Hyperglobalists on both the Left and the Right contend that this neoliberal hegemonic order is reducing the power of nation-states in a global economic system.

However, the status of neoliberalism in relation to the global economy is more complex than this simple rendition. Critical accounts of neoliberalism’s domination of the contemporary global economy overrate its coherence as both an ideology and a policy agenda. At the core of neoliberalism is a significant tension around the role of the state in a market society. Since the original meeting of the MPS, neoliberals have wanted to displace politics and policies associated with collectivism with an economic doctrine of free markets and the rule of law. Achieving this goal has meant rejecting not only nation-states as autonomous decision-making bodies, but also all other regulatory and interventionist agencies, including so-called “neoliberal” global economic institutions such as the IMF, World Bank, and WTO.

However, the spontaneous order of the global market economy envisioned by neoliberals like Hayek cannot be obtained by dismantling the modern state. The notion of a laissez-faire, self-stabilizing global economic system seems anarchic because the market relies on forms of order that it cannot generate by itself. Neoliberalism dictates that sovereign nation-states have a limited but crucial role to play in enforcing law and order, in maintaining property rights and a sound currency, and most significantly, in aiding national integration into the global economy.

Early in the twenty-first century, three main factors threaten neoliberalism's aspiration to maintain itself as a universal ideology and policy agenda for globalization. First, increasing levels of Third World poverty and debt are creating pressures for increased and reformed global governance, rather than the abolition of institutions like the IMF and World Bank. The call is to make these bodies more representative of the nations they serve and more publicly accountable for the decisions they take. Second, neoliberalism faces increasing pressures for global collective action to ensure environmental protection. Any serious attempt to address international environmental concerns, such as global warming and other forms of climate change, could lead to the rejection of neoliberal policy prescriptions at both national and global levels, and the acceptance of interventionist and regulatory measures to restore ecological balance. Finally, the economic crisis of 2008 and 2009 led to a considerable discrediting of neoliberal policy prescriptions. The global recession underlies the fact that markets depend and have always depended on states. At present, however, although neoliberalism may be the subject of intense criticism, no compelling alternative has been proposed. Paul Mason suggests that the world is at a point of "hiatus in history" (2009, 141) while the search for a new economic paradigm takes place.

Conclusion

Neoliberal ideas have strongly shaped the development of the national economies and the global market economy since the 1970s. Along the way, neoliberalism also became the central economic plank of neoconservatism. However, the dominance of neoliberalism has not gone unchallenged, and its influence may wane as new problems come to the fore and attention shifts to the institutional requirements for creating a more economically stable, representative, and sustainable global economy.

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See also [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Friedman, Milton](#); [Globalization](#); [Hayek, Friedrich](#); [Humanitarian Intervention](#); [Ideology](#); [International Relations Theory and Political Thought](#); [Keynes, John Maynard](#); [Liberalism](#); [Libertarianism](#); [Neoconservatism](#); [Progress](#); [Smith](#),

[Adam](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [United Nations](#), [Theories of the](#); [Welfare State](#), [Theories of the](#)

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Nietzsche, Friedrich

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Nietzsche, Friedrich

It is hard to overstate the influence of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) on the political thought and politics of the twentieth century. In part because of Nietzsche's sister's manipulation of his writings after his death, his concepts of the will to power and the *Übermensch*—literally “overman” but often translated as “superman”—were used in support of the ideology of National Socialism for the first half of the twentieth century. Efforts by American and Italian scholars in the 1950s and 1960s to translate and study complete collections of Nietzsche's work introduced a more complex and richer Nietzsche whose work became important to a new generation of diverse theorists. Nietzsche's political thought is important for having effected a break with many of the foundational ideas of modern thought and for thereby leading the way to contemporary or postmodern thought. His major writings include *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), *Human, All Too Human* (1878–90), *The Gay Science* (1882), *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883–85), *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), and *The Genealogy of Morals* (1887).

The posthumously published *The Will to Power*, a collection of Nietzsche's unpublished manuscripts, remains controversial as to its representing or misrepresenting his beliefs.

Biography

Nietzsche was born on October 15, 1844, in the small town of Röcken in the Prussian province of Saxony. His parents were Karl Ludwig Nietzsche and Franziska Oehler; his father, a Lutheran minister, died when Nietzsche was five. In his youth, Nietzsche was greatly influenced by the Romantics, including Johann Goethe and Friedrich Hölderlin, as reflected in his earliest autobiographical writings, poems, and musical compositions. He studied classical philology at a private boarding school and at the universities of Bonn and Leipzig, and at 24, because of a very strong recommendation from his professor Friedrich Ritschl, Nietzsche was appointed professor at the University of Basel in Switzerland without having received his doctorate. In 1868, Nietzsche met Richard and Cosima Wagner and began a friendship and collaboration with them that had lasting personal and philosophical importance for Nietzsche. Nietzsche renounced his Prussian citizenship when he began his teaching position, but he served in the Franco-Prussian War in 1870 as a medic. After a few months working with the wounded and dead, he contracted dysentery and diphtheria and returned to Basel after convalescing. Nietzsche had already suffered from serious headaches, and he continued to deal with disabling eye problems, headaches, and illness throughout his life. Because of deteriorating health, Nietzsche resigned from Basel in 1879 with an annual pension.

From approximately 1877 to 1879, Nietzsche struggled with growing disillusionment with his early commitment to the Romantic ideals embodied by Wagner. Nietzsche's disillusionment with Wagner and Romanticism in the 1870s seems to have generated some of his core beliefs, including the rejection of the Romantic notion of the genius and his antifoundationalist understanding of history and values. In 1876, after distancing himself from the Wagners, Nietzsche traveled to Sorrento to stay with friends, Malwida von Meysenbug and Paul Rée. Together they read the French moralists and skeptics Montaigne, La Rochefoucauld, La Bruyere, and Stendhal. The first section of *Human* had already been written, but the second shows the influence of these readings and of Rée's work on a history of moral sentiments, which Nietzsche continued to refer to as late as the writing of *The Genealogy of Morals*. For ten years after his resignation from Basel in 1879, he lived a nomadic and largely solitary life, traveling according to the season to northern Italy, Switzerland, and Germany in search of the right climate for writing despite his deteriorating health.

Nietzsche suffered a severe mental breakdown in 1889 from which he never recovered. After a series of strokes in 1898, he died in 1900 in the care of his sister.

Early Political Thought

Because of his studies in philology, Nietzsche's earliest influences were the Greek classics. Following classical philology's inclination toward humanism, Nietzsche became an atheist in his university years. Like many of the time, Nietzsche became enthralled with the Romantic notion of the genius as the rare individual who is able to express the deep truths of a hidden ideal reality through intuitive, creative, and artistic expression. Wagner, who saw himself as the genius capable of revitalizing German culture through music, encouraged Nietzsche's attraction to Romanticism and the ideas of Arthur Schopenhauer. It was under Wagner's influence that Nietzsche wrote *The Birth of Tragedy*, in which he explored the role of the music of pre-Socratic Greek tragedy in leading people to tap into their intuitive and life-affirming connections to their world.

The Will to Power

Nietzsche formulated his theory of the will in opposition to major aspects of Schopenhauer's philosophy of the will. Schopenhauer's philosophy posited that the human world consists of "the will" or human motivations and drives, which are primarily directed at the desire to live and which bring people into continual conflict with each other. For Schopenhauer, this view meant that the human will should be controlled and suppressed. Only in artistic expression, and particularly in music, could the will be expressed in a way that has any positive value for life. Nietzsche agreed with Schopenhauer's view of the will as constituting the human world, but he disagreed with Schopenhauer that the will must be suppressed to control the conflict that it engenders. Nietzsche rejected Schopenhauer's call for self-denial and self-sacrifice and instead accepted the will as the only truly meaningful element of life. In doing so, Nietzsche believed he was claiming a great "yes" for life. He argued that individuals must embrace life and with it the darker side of the human will. For Nietzsche, this was part of the

exploration of the self, which includes finding and affirming one's innate passions, desires, and abilities.

As Nietzsche's theory developed, his conception of the will shifted from the means to access an ideal cultural reality to an innate desire for power—the “will to power.” Nietzsche believed that individuals were stronger, healthier, and more creative when they accepted the intuitive and animalistic side of human nature. This concept was later used by Nazi thinkers and propagandists to support the idea of a superior race of people, who, according to this interpretation of Nietzsche's work, could justifiably exploit the weak. This use of Nietzsche seems to have been facilitated by a collection of Nietzsche's writings published by his sister under the title *The Will to Power*. This edition has been discredited because she omitted sections that criticized both Christianity and anti-Semitism. Although Nietzsche does use the term “race,” he clearly directed his criticisms very widely, including against the nationalists of the period. Nietzsche's goal was to encourage a life-affirming culture, which necessarily embraces the human will to survive (power) as the individual's way of being in the world.

History, Perspective, and Knowledge

Over the course of his work, Nietzsche developed several theories about the meaning of history. Early in his work, he saw history as something to be studied in order to find examples of the heroic individuals one should emulate. In *Untimely Meditations* (1873–76) and *Human, All Too Human*, however, Nietzsche rejected the idea of a primal, ideal world of unchanging truths for a more sober view of history as composed of the values and language of specific historical contexts. This shift in understanding of history was a part of Nietzsche's shift in thinking about Romanticism and the idea of the inspired genius. Nietzsche came to understand the pursuit of knowledge not as an inspired search by a few rare individuals, but instead as a slow and methodical effort of study, in particular with regard to history.

Nietzsche's theory of history as fundamentally perspectival has influenced contemporary political theory. Nietzsche argued that history is accessible only from individual perspectives and is therefore unknowable in its totality. History thus does not reveal timeless or universal truths, instead

revealing how certain groups of people or cultures have been shaped by the construction of knowledge and values over time. Nietzsche describes this perspective-based knowledge as a *horizon* of the past and future within the grasp of the individual. This conception has both positive and negative aspects; it allows the strong individual to carve out a manageable and life-affirming understanding of history, but it also means that humans are never fully aware of all the influences that have shaped who they are and what they value. It also suggested to Nietzsche, in contrast with Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, that the history of humankind as a whole has no grand purpose. Instead, history reveals the contingency of human values rather than their deep and lasting truths.

Reevaluation of All Values

As Nietzsche came to posit the contingency of historical knowledge and human values, he turned his focus more thoroughly on the history of morality and on whether dominant moral and metaphysical systems such as Christianity and Kantianism contained any universal validity. He posed the following question: Under what circumstances do humans invent the value judgments of good and evil? In *Beyond Good and Evil* and *A Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche argued that the basic concepts of good and evil are originally products of the power of the nobility to claim for themselves the name of good. Later, good and evil are shaped by Judaism and Christianity's claim that the oppressed people are blessed and morally superior. The acceptance of weakness as good is an attack on the human will to power and as such must be exposed as a fateful historical error. Nietzsche wrote that to deny the will results in *ressentiment* (the French term for resentment), which meant for Nietzsche that the individual is consumed by jealousy, weakness, sickness, and a rejection of life. According to Nietzsche, Judaism and Christianity are "slave moralities" of *ressentiment*. The acceptance of one's weakness means that individuals define who they are in relation to negative feelings toward others. The bitterness and jealousy toward others poisons the individual and, as it spreads throughout society, demeans everyone.

In relation to his reevaluation of all values, Nietzsche concerned himself with the consequences for humanity of losing Christianity as the dominant

value system of the West. Nietzsche first proclaimed that “God is dead” in his book *Daybreak*, and this claim becomes central in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. The statement suggests that in modernity, Christian beliefs are waning without people’s acknowledging it and without any conscious efforts to reconstruct new moral orders for society. Nietzsche was concerned that, without traditional religions, humanity would descend into nihilism and despair. But Nietzsche did not want to prop up Christianity or any other metaphysical belief wherein humanity is connected to eternal sources of meaning. As an alternative to these beliefs and to nihilism, he urged people to embrace the natural human impulses and desires of the will that compose human lives.

Contemporary Influence

This constellation of ideas about history, the human will, and values has profoundly influenced political thought. Nietzsche’s theory of history and his genealogy of morals were influential for poststructuralism and the work of Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida. The genealogy of values is a critical tool for many political theorists, including Judith Butler and Wendy Brown. Nietzsche’s view of the individual’s will and his or her passions as the center of meaning in opposition to philosophic systems and traditional religions made him a foundational thinker in existentialism, preceding and influencing other existentialists, including Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, and Jean-Paul Sartre. Nietzsche’s embrace of the individual will has been important for agonistic political thinkers. Agonism affirms the place of conflict in politics, as opposed to the goal of consensus. Those associated with agonism argue that people have fundamental individual differences that should not be suppressed in order to arrive at political decisions, resulting in the acceptance of ongoing conflict. Bonnie Honig, William Connolly, and Chantal Mouffe are among the leading agonistic thinkers.

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See also [Darwinism and Social Darwinism](#); [Foucault, Michel](#); [German Political Thought](#); [Hegelianism](#); [National Socialism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Sartre, Jean-Paul](#)

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Nineteenth-Century Political Thought

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Nineteenth-Century Political Thought

The aftermath of two revolutions, and the enduring impact of a third, shaped political thinking at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Both the American and French revolutions had deeper causes than the economic and political instability that was their spark, lying in ideas that grew during the eighteenth century that increasingly undermined conventional justifications for political authority. The American Revolution, while casting aside the yoke of British imperialism and placing the United States on a path to becoming the world's most powerful democracy, had less of a lasting impact on political thinking than the French Revolution. In France, as the Revolutionaries strived to free themselves from the political institutions of the *ancien régime* and force through a social revolution, they simultaneously bequeathed a rich vocabulary of political concepts that would serve to define political thought in the centuries to come. In a more direct fashion, as the Revolutionary Wars spread the values of *liberté*, *égalité*, and *fraternité* across central Europe, resistance to these ideas also helped crystallize what would become doctrinal positions. As the seating in the National Assembly bequeathed the right-left spectrum to the history of political thought, political ideologies similarly began to define themselves in reaction to the values that were the motor of the Revolution. This, inevitably, was not a case of a single moment of intellectual delineation, but it is nevertheless useful to see the development of political thought in the nineteenth century as an ongoing conversation with the legacies of the French Revolution. Similarly, the third “revolution” that provided the

impetus to political thinking and action during this period, the Industrial Revolution, was a constantly developing issue of concern and interest for political theorists. As the basis of economic wealth in the major powers changed, a host of political positions emerged concerning both the viability and the desirability of industrial capitalism as the dominant system of economic organization. And, as the impact of industrialization on the landscape and the physical and psychological consequences for those at the forefront of industrial production became clearer, the discourse spurred by these issues became more heated.

These three processes of structural change, both political and economic, gave rise to political positions that developed across the nineteenth century and continue to inform political discussion. Most significantly, the emergence of the great ideological families—conservatism, liberalism, and socialism—and the various subschools that surfaced in the wake of these giants, became a discernible feature of the intellectual landscape as the century unfolded. Again, the legacies of the “dual revolution” were not necessarily clear-cut but the product of a constant process of debate and reassessment that gave the cluster of foundational ideas their initial momentum. As the century progressed, new challenges, and new revolutions, would necessitate the revision of these positions, but it was in the nineteenth century that the enduring framework of political labels and concepts was forged.

Conservatism: Questioning the Enlightenment and Revolution

The modern conception of revolution, one that owes so much to the sanguinary path taken in France after 1789, presupposes the existence of those resistant to radical change. As the Revolutionaries dismantled the old order and built a modern state informed by the ethos of the Enlightenment upon its ruins, questioning voices could be heard asking whether too much might be lost in the transition from the old to the new. Even in 1790, before the worst excesses of the Revolution, Edmund Burke (1729–97) had laid the foundations of the critical rejection of the Revolutionary heritage, if not conservatism itself, in his classic work *Reflections on the Revolution in*

France. Although prior to the nineteenth-century hardening of ideological boundaries, Burke's critique of abstract reason as the basis of political action, and emphasis on the value of tradition as a guiding principle in political decision making, exercised an important influence over the subsequent development of conservatism.

Although Burke's professed sympathy for the grievances of the American revolutionists placed him at the more liberal end of the conservatism spectrum, other thinkers rejecting the heritage of the Enlightenment and its manifestation in the French Revolution developed a more austere brand of conservatism. Joseph de Maistre (1753–1821) was a quintessential counterrevolutionary, fleeing France as the Revolutionary Army gained the upper hand, and spending a significant amount of time in the court of Tsar Alexander I. In de Maistre's most important work, *Considérations sur la France* (1796), the French Revolution took on a providential significance, with eighteenth-century rationalist philosophy insidiously undermining the position of Christianity in European society, and thereby the authority of the French monarchy. De Maistre's political theory therefore amounted to a call for a necessary authority to bind the social order, and he viewed the bloodletting of the Terror as a divine punishment for humanity's reckless renunciation of religious authority. Similarly critical of the Revolution's attacks on religion, Louis de Bonald (1754–1840) endeavored to develop the traditionalist critique into a systematic theory, advancing a theory of language seeing god as the ultimate sanction, a position that he carried over into his political thought. For the early French conservatives, the great error of the Revolution was its atheistic intellectual foundation, and its misplaced faith in rationalism as the cornerstone of political action. France also gave the word "conservative" to the political lexicon, with the royalist and Catholic Francois René de Chateaubriand (1768–1848) and Bonald naming their journal *Le Conservateur*. Even outside of France, the regicidal momentum of the Revolution influenced early expressions of conservative political thought. The Russian historian Nikolai Karamzin (1766–1826), for instance, who like Maistre enjoyed the patronage of Alexander I, defended the importance of tradition and urged the Tsar to reign in the political liberalization advocated by his advisor Mikhail Speransky (1772–1839). In Switzerland, Karl Ludwig von Haller (1768–1854), who also buttressed his political arguments with dense historical analysis, similarly rejected the idea

of the state created by the Revolution. Adopting the term “restoration” to describe his political beliefs, Haller looked to the family as the ideal model of political organization, with the monarch in a paternal role.

In the United States, conservatism pursued a different although parallel path. Although the defense of tradition inherent in conservatism posed a problem for a country borne of the rejection of monarchical rule, there was from the outset a vocal demand for a centralized state that could prosper in an age of developing superpowers. This position was captured in the ideas of Alexander Hamilton (1757–1804), co-author of *The Federalist Papers* (1788) and founder of the Federalist Party. Hamilton’s conservatism, despite his sympathy for a strong national government, was expressed in an underlying belief in individual inequality, and a belief that the federalist system would usefully limit the power of the individual, allowing the intellectually superior to rise to positions of significance. Tellingly, Hamilton was plagued by charges of elitism and sympathy for monarchism. The confluence of economic security ensured by protectionism and modernization pursued through governmental means was later taken up by figures like Daniel Webster (1782–1852), who as a member of the Whig Party maintained a distrust for the American people at large and a thoroughgoing elitism. Although the concessions toward centralized government and rampant capitalism complicate placing this conservatism on the political spectrum, in the antebellum South, a more recognizable conservative tradition emerged, which was anxious to defend property rights, paternalism, and hierarchy, the latter manifested in the most hierarchical of economic systems: slavery. Both John Taylor of Caroline (1753–1824) and John Randolph of Roanoke (1773–1833) temporized on the issue of slavery, asserting the primacy of states’ rights, before Southern conservatives George Fitzhugh (1806–81) and John C. Calhoun (1782–1850) advanced an argument of white supremacy to justify its continuance.

The confluence of conservatism, nationalism, and racism toward the end of the nineteenth century often entailed a more magnanimous stance toward the state than the one that informed the conservatism that grew after the French Revolution. On one level, this was a pragmatic reorientation; for thinkers resistant to radical change, the idea of returning to the political forms of old would require a revolution as equally destructive as that of

1789. Consequently, one direction taken by the conservative imagination was a critique of the ascendancy of capitalism and the primacy of the “cash nexus” in social relations, as the Scottish essayist and historian Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881), its most inveterate critic, termed it. Elsewhere, the diffusion of Darwinism at the end of the nineteenth century proved a fillip to those seeing a fundamental inequality between racial groups, a view that Carlyle was not unsympathetic toward. It was the Frenchman Joseph Arthur de Gobineau (1816–82), however, that largely codified this position, producing a four-volume work, *Essai sur L’Inégalité des Races Humaines* (1853–15), that fused a rejection of the democracy on conservative grounds, with an anxiety over racial mixing and degeneration. Maurice Barrés (1862–1923), an active Anti-Dreyfusard, and his colleague Charles Maurras (1868–1952), leading member of *Action Française*, were similarly motivated by a fear of social degeneration that led them to an exclusive nationalism.

Liberalism and the Ambiguities of the Revolution

Liberalism, the political ideology defined by a deep concern over the power of the state, emerged in tandem with the modern centralized state in the aftermath of the French Revolution. Nevertheless, liberalism took a circuitous path in the nineteenth century, and as with conservatism, the legacy of the Revolution was always open to dispute and revision. Like conservatives, liberal thinkers were, in general, profoundly skeptical of the movement toward democracy that began to gather momentum as the century unfolded, but they differed in seeing a preferable hierarchy as one of ability rather than of birth. Although conservatives like de Maistre saw aristocratic society capped by the religiously sanctioned authority of a monarch as the ideal system, liberals, at least toward the middle of the century, held a belief in the potential for every adult male to act responsibly in the political sphere—that is, of course, when their fiscal solvency proved both their capacity for rational decision making and a vested interest in political stability.

The connection with economics is revealing; it points to the fact that although conservatives tended to be anxious about the “cash” relation characteristic of the free market, liberals were more positive about the

civilizing effects of commerce. It is tempting therefore to look for the roots of the liberal ethos in that “dismal science”—Carlyle, again—political economy, and Adam Smith’s (1723–90) belief, expounded in his influential *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776), that the pursuit of individual self-interest could produce general social well-being. Early English liberals like Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) held a similar faith in the importance of individual self-direction, and Bentham based his utilitarian philosophy, with its famous dictum “the greatest happiness of the greatest number,” on a principle of egoism. The guiding principle of individual action, for Bentham, was the pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain, which he combined with an ethical doctrine that the measure of right and wrong was its promotion of general happiness. Institutions, in Bentham’s schema, were charged with providing the environment for human perfectibility, with the state in the role of “night-watchman”—as the liberal position on the state has become known. Bentham’s fame grew in the nineteenth century, mainly under the influence of James Mill (1773–1836), who invested utilitarianism with an austere focus on “interests” over the “wants” emphasized by Benthamism. Hard work, thrift, and self-reliance, the quintessential Victorian values, were placed at the heart of a liberal politics, drawing heavily on an idea of personal character that was familiar currency during the period. James Mill’s son, John Stuart Mill (1806–73), who was to experience firsthand this austerity as the subject of his father’s intense educational experiment, would later temper this aspect of the liberal philosophy in his important *On Liberty* (1859). The younger Mill, also an early advocate of increasing women’s political rights, added a perception of the good life to the utilitarian calculus, stressing the invigorating nature of individual self-assertion, and the “higher” pleasures of aesthetics. *On Liberty* can therefore be read, in part, as a defense of eccentricity, against the moralizing conformity threatened by mass societies.

Liberalism in Britain was clearly a rich political tradition, and perhaps a logical result of the country’s position as the crucible of modern capitalism. But Europe more generally contributed much to the development of liberal thought, and liberalism in turn contributed significantly to political movements around the globe. Benjamin Constant (1767–1830) drew an important distinction in his work *The Liberty of the Ancients Compared*

with that of the Moderns (1819), between a participatory liberty of the ancient city-states and a modern civil liberty, with the individual protected from the overbearing power of the state. In practical terms, Constant argued that a constitutional monarchy on a British model was the surest way of protecting this liberty and reconciled himself to Napoleon's rule. Constant's theory rested on his belief that a constitutional monarchy would act as a moderating influence, overseeing a balance of powers. This ethos of balance was also an important dynamic in American politics, as seen in the first three Articles of the Constitution of the United States. In his lengthy study *Democracy in America* (1835), Alexis de Tocqueville (1805–59) described the vibrancy of American civil life as the result of the pervasive ethic of financial responsibility and accumulation—a process that he believed was tending toward economic equality. Although democratic society had many excellent attributes, Tocqueville cautioned that the individualism nurtured in this system stymied the natural ascension of intellectual authorities, resulting in an undue focus on public opinion. This view, with its admonition that the end of aristocracy did not necessarily mean the end of tyrannical rule, was influential on the younger Mill, with both thinkers adopting the phrase “tyranny of the majority.”

Despite the generally cynical view of the state in liberal political thought, nineteenth-century liberalism was often implicated in the process of state building. The era of liberal nationalism was characterized by a belief in the right to self-determination, albeit for nations enough to be economically viable. These themes were encapsulated in the thought of Italian nationalist Giuseppe Mazzini (1805–72), whose idea of future European political organization was not a multitude of small states united by shared linguistic and cultural ties but a lesser number of large nation-states capable of taking a leading role in world affairs. Liberal nationalism, with its emphasis on active citizenry as the heart of the nation, therefore often appealed to those countries under imperial domination and with a developing and active middle class. The life of the Venezuelan born Simón Bolívar (1783–1830), who led a number of military campaigns against Spanish control in South America, epitomized many of these republican ideals inherited from the experience of the French Revolution. The complex relationship to state power suggested by liberal nationalism was representative of an increasing recognition among certain liberals that the state could be a source of

progress. For the English liberal philosopher Thomas Hill Green (1836–82), deeply influenced by the idealism of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831), the state was not simply there to prevent conflict but could actively promote the common good, a stance that would inform the subsequent direction of liberalism in Britain.

Socialism: Capitalism and the State

For nineteenth-century socialists, far from ushering in freedom, capitalism had ensnared the great majority in new chains. Although liberals might preach the moralizing impact of trade, and see the individual pursuit of self-interest benefiting all of humankind, socialists tended to view this philosophy as an apologia for the exploitation of those forced to create wealth in the first place. There is a parallel here with the concern characteristic of conservatism, that capitalism had replaced traditional, organic, social relations with an economically motivated relation of self-interest. After all, Karl Marx (1818–83) and Friedrich Engels (1820–95), the most famous socialist theoreticians of the nineteenth century, borrowed Carlyle’s evocative phrase “cash nexus” in their *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848). Yet, although conservative thinkers looked to the restitution of monarchy, or the maintenance of aristocratic privilege, as a maintaining link with tradition, socialists tended to view the forces unleashed by the dual revolution as pointing the way to a more encompassing freedom.

For many of the earliest nineteenth-century socialists, the French Revolution served as an example of how not to achieve social change. Balking at the prospect of revolutionary bloodshed, several influential socialist thinkers attempted to theorize a peaceful journey to postcapitalist society—a society based on principles of solidarity, equality, and a life free from toil. Central to this vision was a harmonious life defined by communal living arrangements and shared labor. Robert Owen (1771–1858), who was to play an important role in the development of the cooperative movement in Britain, pursued two important experiments in communal living, at New Lanark, Scotland, and at New Harmony, Indiana. Another powerful influence on the communal movement was the Frenchman Charles Fourier (1772–1837), whose idea of *phalanstères* comprised precisely 1620 people,

the number derived from a doubling of the 810 character types identified by Fourier, inspired a host of communal societies in the United States in the mid-century. For both Owen and Fourier, and Henri Saint-Simon (1760–1825), perhaps the most influential of all in the subsequent development of socialism, the baleful effects of the Industrial Revolution needed addressing. Saint-Simon, rather than looking to communalism, and adopting a less hostile attitude toward capitalist accumulation, looked to a technocracy of scientists and industrialists as the guiding hand that would dispel social strife.

To Marx and Engels, writing in 1848, Owen, Fourier, and Saint-Simon's socialism did not seem to be a durable project. They chided their “utopian” mentality, commenting that their politics, formulated while capitalism was in its infancy, failed to comprehend the nature of class society. The utopians' rejection of violent revolution, explained partly by their historical proximity to the Terror, was also a product of the immaturity of the proletariat, the revolutionary class that Marx and Engels believed would secure communism. The utopians looked on the callow proletariat merely as the most oppressed segment of society rather than an agent of change and preached a doctrine of grand reconciliation instead of revolution. Marx and Engels developed a theoretically rich political thought, drawing insights from the classical economists, Hegelian philosophy, and the French socialism from which they endeavored to distance themselves. Rooting their politics in the supposedly scientific theory of historical materialism, best presented in their posthumously published work *The German Ideology* (1846), Marx and Engels argued that communist society would be borne of the contradictions inherent in capitalist society. Their Hegelianism led to the argument that the contradictions that shape the dynamic of history would reach reconciliation in communism, after the revolutionary activity of the working class secures the social ownership of the means of production. The state for Marx and Engels, while designed to perpetuate class interests in the present and ultimately redundant in the future, could nevertheless serve a useful regulatory function in the transition from capitalism to communism.

Anarchism, an important political force in France, Spain, and areas of Latin America, diverged from Marxism primarily on its relation to the state.

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–65), the first to declare himself an anarchist, and author of the infamous *What is Property?* (1840), had already earned the rebuke of Marx in his *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1847), which contributed to the developing split between Marxists and anarchists over the best tactics for overcoming capitalism. These divisions became more pronounced after the Russian Michael Bakunin (1814–76) was expelled from the International Workingmen's Association after losing a dispute with Marx over the issue of participation in parliamentary politics. Bakunin, and the anarchists, remained intransigent that any activity in mainstream politics was damaging to the revolution they believed necessary to destroy capitalist society and would blunt the revolutionary consciousness of the workers. On this basis, they looked forward to a revolutionary upheaval initiated through popular action that would displace the overarching authority of the state, and organize social life along communal lines, with individual communes united in a federal structure. Peter Kropotkin (1842–1921), particularly influenced by the ideas of Auguste Comte (1798–1857) and Charles Darwin (1809–82), developed this vision of anarchism, while striving to place his theory of mutual aid on a sound scientific basis. In the United States, where socialism was generally weaker, a distinctive variety of individualistic anarchism developed, associated in particular with Josiah Warren (1798–1874) and Benjamin Tucker (1854–1939), that diverged from Bakunin and Kropotkin's anarchism primarily on the perceived collectivizing consequences of the social ownership of the means of production.

Conclusion

The meaning of the French Revolution was never a settled issue in the nineteenth century, and the persistent debates over its legacy not only informed the construction of the major political ideologies but also their internal negotiations. In a similar fashion, the deep structural and economic changes that began to gather momentum during the nineteenth century had various permutations for the political thought of that century. Conservatism emerged in reaction to this dual revolution, wary of the abstract political reasoning enshrined in the Revolutionary project, and anxious over the destabilizing impact of capitalism's growth. Inevitably, there would be compromise with both the state and capitalism as these institutions became entrenched, perhaps adding credence to Michael Oakeshott's (1901–90)

comment that the best way to think of conservatism is as a “disposition” rather than as an immutable doctrine. Liberalism, the political tradition at the forefront of Europe’s nineteenth-century revolutions, both political and economic, had an ambiguous relationship to the French Revolution, passing from enthusiasm to fear. Welcoming change that would remove, or limit, the power of monarchism, as the Revolution descended into organized violence and political centralization, dissenting voices could be heard. Naturally, the specific national histories of these political traditions are fundamental to their development, but it is helpful to consider the vacillating position on state power in relation to the broad processes set in train by the Revolution. For socialism, an ideology riddled with subtraditions both national and historic, a uniting theme was an opposition to the effects of capitalism. There was debate over the best means of achieving change, meaning that the Revolution’s legacy remained a pressing issue, but socialists were convinced that the freedom offered by capitalism was no freedom at all.

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See also [Anarchism](#); [Bakunin, Michael](#); [Bentham, Jeremy](#); [Bolívar, Simón](#); [Burke, Edmund](#); [Carlyle, Thomas](#); [Comte, Auguste](#); [Conservatism](#); [Darwinism and Social Darwinism](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Empire and Political Thought](#); [Engels, Friedrich](#); [Fourier, Charles](#); [French Revolution, Political Thought of the](#); [Gobineau, Joseph-Arthur de](#); [Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich](#); [Individualism](#); [Kropotkin, Peter A.](#); [Liberalism](#); [Maistre, Joseph de](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Mazzini, Giuseppe](#); [Mill, James](#); [Mill, John Stuart](#); [Nationalism](#); [Owen, Robert](#); [Proudhon, Pierre-Joseph](#); [Race and Racism](#); [Saint-Simon, Henri de](#); [Smith, Adam](#); [Socialism](#); [Tocqueville, Alexis de](#); [Utilitarianism](#); [Utopianism](#)

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Harvard philosopher Robert Nozick (1938–2002) rose to prominence in the 1970s with his defense of libertarianism and went on to become one of the late twentieth century's most influential thinkers. His major publication in this area—*Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (1974)—was, in part, a response to the egalitarian theory of social justice developed by fellow Harvard political philosopher John Rawls in his *A Theory of Justice* (1971). According to Nozick, the preoccupation with matching distributive outcomes to preconceived patterns, typical of views such as Rawls's, overlooks a set of already existing freedoms and ownership rights. When the state removes goods from an individual (through mechanisms such as taxation), it rides roughshod over those rights and freedoms. As John Locke had argued in his *Second Treatise of Civil Government* (1679), property is already owned and does not fall from heaven like manna, so the notion of distributive justice is not morally neutral; it hides the fact that it is redistributive.

Nozick's view poses a potentially devastating dilemma for views such as Rawls's, which Nozick terms "patterned" principles of justice. Nozick argues that those who wish to maintain a given pattern (equality, or Rawls's difference principle, for example) must either mandate massive infractions of liberty by prohibiting individuals from engaging in simple exchanges of goods or accept the fact that liberty upsets patterns and will likely lead to significant inequalities in wealth and property. Nozick's well-known imaginary example of Wilt Chamberlain, the basketball player, who demands an extra 25 cents on the price of each ticket to see him play (in

return for enjoying the exercise of his extraordinary talents) illustrates the dilemma: The state either prevents citizens from spending a mere 25 cents of their money as they wish (prohibiting capitalist acts between consenting adults) or accepts the unsustainability of any baseline egalitarian distribution.

At the root of Nozick's view is a commitment to a Kantian notion of autonomy—that individuals should be treated as ends, not merely as means—and that the rights of ownership and liberties that flow from this assumption are of greater importance than the state's claim to redistribution. Nozick thus argues that justice should be concerned with the historical development of a given distribution. As long as no coercion, fraud, or theft has occurred in the process of transferring goods, and those goods were legitimately owned in the first place, then a distribution is just. In this, Nozick's view explicitly follows that of John Locke by expanding on the labor-mixing theory of ownership, whereby previously unowned property can come to be owned via an individual's working on it (mixing her labor with it).

The only legitimate state becomes a minimal one—one that protects the system of contracts that underpins the market (the free exchange of goods and services) and rectifies any illegitimate transfers. The illegitimacy of redistributive mechanisms means that the state must have no role in the provision of public goods and services such as healthcare, education, welfare benefits, local amenities, and public transport. All such goods would have to be provided for by voluntary private schemes.

Nozick's libertarian political philosophy has inspired myriad critical responses, including book-length treatment by analytical Marxism's leading proponent, G. A. Cohen, in *Self-Ownership, Freedom, and Equality* (1995). Nozick's treatment of distributive justice often overshadows other important aspects of *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, including his critical treatment of average utilitarianism via the "utility monster" example, and his hypothetical "Experience Machine." The latter imagines a machine capable of perfectly simulating (by acting directly on the brain) the pleasure of any experience chosen by the user. Users could select a life-long program that included their greatest desires—writing the great American novel,

scaling Everest—and they would get these great experiences *as if* they were real. The aim of the example is to illustrate that there is more to a valuable life than simply the internal picture of pleasure to the individual. Here Nozick seeks to overturn the familiar position (often associated with utilitarianism) of hedonism—which reduces value to the pleasure it brings to the individual—by asking whether we would really see no difference between reality and a perfect simulation if they both created equal amounts of pleasure.

Nozick has made significant contributions to other areas of philosophy, including epistemology, free will and determinism, and the nature of identity, in his *Philosophical Explanations* (1981); a major contribution to decision theory, including a seminal analysis of Newcomb's problem, in *The Nature of Rationality* (1993); and in *The Examined Life* (1989), which addresses a broader range of life's puzzles, such as faith, death, love, and the meaning of life.

David Stevens

See also [Anarchism](#); [Conservatism](#); [Equality and Egalitarianism](#); [Justice](#); [Liberalism](#); [Libertarianism](#); [Locke, John](#); [Rawls, John](#); [Property](#); [Theories of](#); [State](#); [Theories of the](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [Utilitarianism](#); [Utopianism](#)

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Nyerere, Julius

Julius Kambarage Nyerere (1922–99) was born on April 13, 1922, in what was then British-controlled Tanganika, East Africa. His primary education began in his village and progressed to a university degree at Makerere in Kampala, Uganda. The next stop was Scotland, where he earned a graduate degree in economics and history from the University of Edinburgh. His political career began in the 1950s as the founder and leader of the Tanganika African National Union (TANU). He was elected President in 1962. In 1964, he brokered a union between Tanganika and the independent island of Zanzibar that created the United Republic of Tanzania. He remained the head of state of Tanzania until 1985, when he became the first contemporary African leader to step down voluntarily from his position of power. He was to become the foremost proponent of one theory of African socialism. His brief tenure as a teacher in a high school near Dar es Salaam earned him the affectionate title of *Mwalimu*, the Kiswahili word for teacher.

Nyerere had quite a bit to “teach” his people about the need to preserve their traditional way of life. His writings are extensive. He called his political theory *Ujamaa* in a pamphlet published in 1962. This Kiswahili word meaning “familyhood” was the basis of his ideas regarding African socialism. To Nyerere, his people needed only to regain their former attitude of mind by reeducating themselves in the ways of their ancestors.

Nyerere declared that socialism could be considered a part of this “attitude of mind.” He understood socialism primarily in terms of a fundamental equality of persons that exists only in the absence of exploitation and the flowering of a type of democracy that had been a staple of African village life. African peoples had no need to be converted to Western notions of socialism steeped in a history of class struggle and organized opposition. The practice of “sitting under a tree” and “talking till you agree” was the foundation of African socialism and democracy. Democracy was fundamentally rule by the people rather than by tyrants. In situations where the people had voted overwhelmingly for the political party that opposed the continuation of foreign domination, this act legitimized a single-party system. As long as there were choices between candidates and free discussion of issues, Nyerere believed, there was no need for another political party in this early stage of decolonization. In 1966, for example, three fourths of the TANU-nominated candidates were defeated by independent opponents.

The Cold War framed the existing theoretical debate and pressured the emerging African nations to choose between the Eastern and Western European ideologies of communism and capitalism. But Nyerere saw the issue primarily in moral terms. Using noncentralized African communities as his model, he argued that this form of gerontocracy was superior because the elders did not own the wealth produced by society but were merely its guardians. The land itself belonged to the community and was distributed in a manner in which each family had access to a portion of it. In this way, a right to life was guaranteed because one had a means of maintaining life.

The communal basis of society ensured an even distribution of wealth with an obligation for everyone to work. A fully functioning member of society would be ashamed to remain idle. Even hospitality had its limits. The elders had worked hard all of their younger days. This mutual involvement with one another made it possible for all to depend on the wealth possessed by the community of which they were members. No one would starve from lack of food or suffer from lack of human dignity. Persons need not worry about what might happen to them tomorrow if they did not hoard wealth today. Society would look out not only for male providers but for widows and orphans as well.

According to Nyerere, compensation for labor must be fairly distributed in proportion to the wealth or poverty of the whole society. The attitude of a capitalist who argues that a rich man's wealth is reward for his superior skills and enterprise is flatly rejected by Nyerere. Hardship as well as prosperity would be shared among the population. Natural disaster might bring famine, but it would bring famine spread out evenly over all.

Nyerere believed that these principles were embedded in Africa's intellectual, social, and economic history. He proposed a blueprint for implementing them. He would collectivize agriculture and establish *ujamaa* villages in which farming communities would live, work, and harvest together, providing for help and security for all who needed it. Productivity would rise, and a rational division of labor would emerge. Government's role in bringing this nation of villages into existence would be based on persuasion, not force. In addition, Nyerere's government also nationalized key sectors of the economy.

As a foundational measure to ensure the success of his utopian vision, Nyerere implemented a set of far-reaching educational reforms. The mission of Tanzania's educational system should be to inculcate socialist values; a pride in African history, culture, and language; an ethic of service in its students; and self-reliance. The curriculum was changed to reflect these new goals. Schools were to be administered so as to become communities that embodied the principle of self-reliance. Students would contribute to their own upkeep.

Ultimately, the nation as a whole needed to become self-reliant. Nyerere used this principle to argue for Tanzanian economic and social-development policies with autonomy from international capitalist institutions. Tanzania had to choose a path to development that did not depend on aid but on the labor of its own people. The Arusha Declaration, drafted by Nyerere and amended and accepted by TANU in 1967, clarified the implementation of these ideas of socialism and self-reliance.

Nyerere's vision was of a united Africa working together for the good of all African peoples. As a committed Pan-Africanist, he mobilized support especially in east and southern Africa for the complete independence of the continent from colonial domination. His role as leader of the Frontline

States positioned him to spearhead support for the elimination of the apartheid regime in South Africa.

Nyerere's death in 1999 became an occasion for the reevaluation of his political theory of *Ujamaa*, African socialism. Although there was a general consensus on the inadequacy of Nyerere's economic policies, many commentators focused on the successes of Nyerere's leadership. Nyerere's implementation of one-party rule could be seen as an original effort to promote democracy and political participation. It is noteworthy that Tanzania was able to transition peacefully into a multiparty system. Nyerere has been praised for bringing unity to a nation with 156 tribes and multiple ethnicities, languages, and religions on a continent that is besieged by divisions that have erupted into armed conflict.

Colin Legum argues that if Tanzania's progress were to be judged by the Quality of Life Index rather than by its gross national product, its progress has been impressive. Rates of infant mortality and life expectancy, along with levels of literacy and the supply of fresh water, all increased dramatically as a result of Nyerere's policies in health and education. Some of the economic setbacks experienced in Tanzania can be attributed to the impact of the rise in oil prices after 1973 and long periods of drought, rather than a failure of his ideas. In terms of theory, he laid out a clear road map with a moral compass.

Most importantly, the *Mwalimu* practiced what he preached. His personal integrity was not questioned. He was known for not succumbing to the temptations of power but for leading a life of austerity, hard work, and humility. Unlike many other African leaders, his dedication to the ideals of a socialist society was exemplary. Although these ideals could be found in Africa's extended family structure, Nyerere understood them in universal terms. He argued that the responsibilities to care for one another must be extended beyond the tribe, community, nation, and continent to all of humanity.

Joy Hendrickson

Hoda Zaki

See also [African Political Thought](#); [Empire and Political Thought](#); [Property, Theories of](#); [Socialism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [Utopianism](#)

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Michael Oakeshott (1901–90) was one of the major political philosophers of the twentieth century. Since his death, there has been a tremendous growth of scholarly interest in and exploration of his work, which has shown him to be more complex and multifaceted than was appreciated during his lifetime. He studied history at Cambridge, where he remained a university lecturer in history until the end of the 1940s. He volunteered for World War II, where he served in British intelligence but also on the front lines. After a brief time at Oxford after the war, he became a professor of political science at the London School of Economics in 1951, which his father (who was a Fabian socialist) had helped found. He preserved his tie with the school long after his retirement in 1967 and continued until the 1980s to participate actively in the famous graduate seminar in the history of political thought that he had founded.

Oakeshott's work has been both academically and more broadly culturally appropriated under three different rubrics that do not often coexist: conservatism, postmodernism, and liberalism. He has made important and distinctive contributions to all three areas of theorizing. Oakeshott believed that all varieties of modern politics from the extreme right to the extreme left manifested a common tendency toward rationalism. According to Oakeshott, the rationalist is simultaneously committed to gnosticism (that a privileged and specially trained elite is privy to secret knowledge of the whole that forms one's field of judgment), the primacy of ideology over theory, and the need and the possibility of attaining certainty. To the

collective personality of the rationalist, Oakeshott counterposes one who sees politics as “the pursuit of intimations” of the steps and missteps of the past and who undertakes piecemeal corrections and redirections of earlier initiatives. Notions such as tacit knowledge, tradition, custom, habit, and the primacy of the irrational over the rational in human nature play a much larger role in the conduct and structure of politics than the rationalist is capable of acknowledging.

Oakeshott’s contribution to postmodernist theorizing consists of his steadfast adherence from his earlier to his later writings to the notion that there is no absolute distinction between a fact and a theory. A fact is merely a theory that one is not willing or able at any given moment in time to probe or interrogate any further. All of our knowledge comes freighted with presuppositions that cannot be unpacked or resolved without engendering further presuppositions. Oakeshott considered the role of philosophy to be to diagnose what he called the “conditionalities” (the particular assumptions and theoretical commitments) that colored the different regions, or what he referred to as the “modes” of experience. For Oakeshott, the chief modes of experience were practice, science, and history, and he later came to add poetry or aesthetic experience. Since philosophy cannot disclose to us anything new about the world or particular regions of experience within it, Oakeshott in his later writings drew an analogy with the activity of engaging in a conversation: In a conversation, there are no secure starting points or termination points. One can begin and leave off virtually anywhere. What is precisely underscored in conversation is the “conditionality” of all starting points and the consequent inconclusiveness of what are taken to be end points.

Oakeshott’s contributions to liberal theory exemplify the same tendencies of thought that are manifested in his conservatism and postmodernism. Oakeshott favors those types of state that pattern themselves on the ideal of what he calls *societas*, whose mode of relationship is formal in terms of rules and is highly critical of modern states that assimilate themselves to the model of “enterprise associations” pursuing the goals of what he calls *universitas*, whose principle of association is a common substantive purpose. In his embrace of *societas* over *universitas*, Oakeshott advocates for a sheerly formal, instrumentalized relationship subsisting between the

public and the private sphere, with the major focus of human activity centering on the private sphere. There seems to be a clear line in Oakeshott connecting his mistrust of reason expressed in his antipathy toward rationalism in politics and his epistemological critique of the possibility of certainty with his ideal-typological characterization of the liberal state as one preoccupied with the legislation and enforcement of formal rules.

Aryeh Botwinick

See also [Conservatism](#); [Human Nature, Theories of](#); [Liberalism](#); [Obedience, Political](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Postmodernism and Political Theory](#); [Psychoanalysis and Political Thought](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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“Obedience,” Jonathan Edwards declared, “is the submitting and yielding of the will of one, to the will of another” ([1754] 2009, 152). Although appearing in a religious treatise on moral agency, Edwards’s statement reveals the essence of political obedience as it was understood in the eighteenth century. Political obedience entails a sovereign making laws and issuing commands to his or her subjects, who signal their compliance by aligning their choices and actions with those laws and commands. Subjects obey because they are morally bound to obey and because they fear the perils and punishments awaiting their disobedience. A meeting ground of freedom and necessity, political obedience is an act of volition by one moral agent, the subject, with regard to another, the sovereign.

It is also an unexpected achievement. After centuries of warfare over the legitimacy and extent of a subject’s right to refuse or resist the sovereign, few theorists before the French Revolution took political obedience for granted. Subjects are unruly, and states are weak; that is the backdrop to the discourse of obedience prior to the nineteenth century, explaining why theorists from Thomas Hobbes to Jean-Jacques Rousseau must go to such lengths to establish the sovereign’s right to govern and the subject’s duty to obey.

In the nineteenth century, however, that tradition changes. Political obedience comes to be seen as a millstone rather than as a challenge. Authority has grown too potent—“my greatest complaint against

democratic government,” writes Alexis de Tocqueville, “is not . . . its weakness, but rather its irresistible strength” (1969, 252)—and the individual too compliant. “The danger which threatens human nature,” writes John Stuart Mill, “is not the excess, but the deficiency, of personal impulses and preferences” (1989, 61). Once there was not enough obedience; now there is too much.

Three transformations underlie this shift. First, political theorists came to believe that democracy had overwhelmed the skepticism that once inspired rebellion. When kings or aristocrats ruled, people were cool, if not hostile, to government. They sought to limit its power. But now that they are in charge, went the argument, they seek to make government more powerful, more able to implement their will.

Second, theorists began seeing authority as having migrated from the state to society. Where governments previously had a monopoly on power, the argument went, power is now shared with—indeed, is wielded by—the forces of society. Those forces, particularly public opinion, are less violent than the state but more coercive. Their presence is nearer, their weight more felt. “The discontent of the multitude,” wrote Ralph Waldo Emerson, is “more formidable than that of the senate” (1990, 34). They are less visible—one cannot, in society, identify the discrete outline of the governor, the silhouette of the jailer—but more insidious. They penetrate the outer perimeters of the self and take up residence inside; there, they tailor the individual’s beliefs, tastes, and desires to fit the fashions of the public.

Last, the individual came to be seen less as an agent and more as an automaton. Long before the deconstructionist and dystopian literatures of the twentieth century, nineteenth-century theorists speak of the social construction—and hence destruction—of the self. The forces of society are so powerful that the self gives way before them; after a time, no self remains to give way. “By dint of not following their own nature,” Mill writes, men no longer have a “nature to follow” (1989, 62). “Under all these screens” of social influence, says Emerson, “I have difficulty to detect the precise man you are” (1990, 33). With the self, the necessary ground of all volition and obedience, unable to bear the weight of its own existence, it

makes less sense, to the nineteenth-century theorist, to speak well or even meaningfully of obedience.

Seen in this light, two emblematic accounts of political obedience in the twentieth century appear almost as afterthoughts. Although formally addressed to the depredations of Nazism and Stalinism and the soft despotism of the modern state, respectively, Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) and Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1977) disclose less the realities of obedience in the twentieth century than the influence on the theorist of the idioms of the nineteenth. The evil of the camps, argues Arendt, is that they turn men into "marionettes," into "bundles of reactions" that can "no longer be psychologically understood." Such men neither obey nor disobey; they "behave," going to their deaths with nary a word or protest (Arendt 1951, 438, 441, 456, 458).

Foucault's carceral society is supposed to offer more space for resistance. But the would-be agent of that resistance, the self, is "the effect and instrument of" that society. The self is not "amputated, repressed, altered by our social order." It is "fabricated in it." The would-be object of resistance, the sovereign, is dispersed throughout a "universally widespread panopticism." With power no longer "localized in the relationships between the state and its citizens"—both having been dissolved, at least in theory, long ago—it is no longer fruitful to speak naively of obedience and disobedience (Foucault 1977, 27, 30, 217, 223).

In everyday life, of course, obedience and disobedience continue their perpetual dialectic, from China to Wall Street to North Africa, although with arguably more tenuous combatants.

Corey Robin

See also [Arendt, Hannah](#); [Authority](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Foucault, Michel](#); [Mill, John Stuart](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Sovereignty, State](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Tocqueville, Alexis de](#)

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George Orwell was born Eric Arthur Blair in Motihari, India, in 1903. He came to Britain with his mother as a child and had a conventional education for a boy of what he described as the upper/lower middle class. He won a scholarship to Eton where, although he failed as a scholar, he read widely, including the entire output of George Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells, who were profoundly to affect his intellectual development. Unsurprisingly, given his background, Orwell joined the Imperial Police soon after leaving Eton in 1922 and served in Burma. He became thoroughly disillusioned with the “business” of empire, and when he returned on sick leave in 1927, he resigned his commission.

Having decided to fulfill his life’s ambition and become a writer, Orwell set out to discover a world about which to write. His imperial experiences left him with a need to identify with the powerless, and he spent months working as a scullion in Paris and living as a tramp around London. His writing on poverty (especially *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 1935) drew him to the attention of Victor Gollancz, publisher of the Left Book Club, who commissioned him to write about unemployment and poverty in the North of England. Expecting to confront only misery, Orwell found himself impressed by the resilience of the northern working class, with its values founded on egalitarianism, community, and common decency. He claimed these values represented democratic socialism “when all the nonsense is stripped off” (Orwell 1937, ch. 13). Orwell’s experiences were chronicled in *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937), which Gollancz published

reluctantly since in part it constituted a savage attack on the left-wing intelligentsia.

Soon Orwell was on his way to the Spanish civil war, ostensibly as a war correspondent but realistically to fight “against fascism and for common decency” (Orwell 1938, ch. 5). He served on the Aragon front with the Trotskyite militia Workers’ Party of Marxist Unification (POUM), and he was wounded nearly fatally. He discovered that the communists, under the influence of their Russian backers, were intent on the destruction of their more revolutionary allies and that his own life was in real danger. What he saw as communist treachery against fellow socialists became the prime motive for much of Orwell’s subsequent writing (for example, *Homage to Catalonia*, 1938). He set about to expose Russian communism as the enemy of democratic socialism. His two greatest works, *Animal Farm* (1945) and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), earned him a lasting reputation as one of the fiercest of the Cold Warriors. His health had never been good. He had picked up dengue fever in Burma and suffered with his chest over the years, eventually developing the tuberculosis that killed him in 1950. Typing the final draft of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* on the remote island of Jura the previous winter had shortened his life. He believed the sacrifice was necessary.

Orwell is largely remembered for what he stood *against*, although even this is misunderstood. He acquired a hatred of Stalinist Russia, and *Animal Farm* is a brilliant parody of the Russian Revolution. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, however, was not intended to be specifically anti-Soviet but rather antitotalitarian, and Orwell believed that totalitarianism posed a threat to all modern states. This is why Winston Smith is a citizen of Oceania (the Western world) and more precisely of Airstrip One (even liberal Britain was at risk). Orwell also awakened us specifically to the systematic, politically inspired abuse of language by leaders in modern states.

But what was he *for*? Because he abstemiously avoided ideology, which inevitably empowered the intelligentsia, Orwell never produced a convincing program of his democratic socialism based on the elusive concepts of common decency, community, or equality. Yet at its heart was the belief that if ordinary people remained loyal to each other and not to

ideas or institutions, if working-class community values survived, and if these values and culture remained embedded in ordinary language, hope for building a moral and political system strong enough to combat totalitarianism remained.

What Orwell bequeathed to humanity was a few books, including two that helped to shape the postwar world, and a substantial number of incisive essays, articles, and reviews on political and cultural themes. Orwell was too inconsistent to be considered a major political thinker, but he was a master of prose. His portrayal of the propensity of modern technocratic centralized states (or institutions) to destroy ordinary human values and language remains unequalled.

Stephen Ingle

See also [Fascism](#); [Progress](#); [Russian Revolution](#), [Political Thought of the](#); [Socialism](#); [Totalitarianism](#); [Utopianism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Ian Donnachie Ian Donnachie

Owen, Robert

Owen, Robert

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Owen, Robert

Robert Owen (1771–1858) had a remarkable career as an entrepreneur turned social reformer. Born in Newtown, mid-Wales, he rose from linen draper's apprentice via drapery stores, machine building, and mill management to become, by 1800, manager of New Lanark, Scotland, one of the largest cotton mills of the time. The mill had been established by his father-in-law, David Dale, whose regime was in part philanthropic and aimed at improving the living and working conditions of his employees. Owen also instituted workplace and community reforms, raising productivity and profits but also enhancing welfare and educational provision.

He used the community as a test bed for Enlightenment ideas, producing essays on *A New View of Society* (1813–14) designed to promote social regeneration in the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars. In 1817, he announced a plan for village communities modeled on New Lanark to overcome the economic crisis. His thinking also moved progressively from competition toward co-operation, which would underpin the new communities.

Although the problem of the poor was a continuing concern, he also promoted factory reform, which was slowly ameliorated by later Factory Acts. Popular education also remained a prime objective both in his model communities and beyond. In 1818, he carried the message of his "New

System” to several European capitals and to the Congress of Sovereigns meeting at Aix-la-Chapelle.

In 1820, he produced his most important economic statement, the *Report to the County of Lanark*, and stood unsuccessfully for Parliament. Despite aristocratic support, he failed to persuade Parliament to act on his recommendations and his attempts in Ireland in 1822–23 were also abortive. Disillusioned, he abandoned Britain for the United States, where in 1825, he purchased New Harmony, a ready-made community on the Indiana frontier. Here he tried a “Community of Equality” (1825–27) and, when it failed, made another unsuccessful effort in Mexico (1829).

Returning to Britain, he associated with working-class movements, including labor exchanges, consumer co-operatives, and trade unions. With John Doherty, he led the short-lived Grand National Consolidated Trade Union (1832–34) also editing the *Crisis*, an Owenite periodical. He continued to promote his ideas through Owenite organizations and another community experiment at Queenwood, Hampshire (1839–45). By this time, Owen had become “Social Father” to Owenism, a position he occupied until his death in 1858. His followers eventually drifted into other reformist organizations.

Although Owen’s ideas did not fit the political agenda of the time, they proved resilient and of longer term influence, notably, those concerned with education and citizenship, gender, welfare, co-operation, environment, and sustainability.

Life-long education was the key to much of Owen’s thinking. If the character formation signaled in his essays was to work, it must extend from infancy, hence, the attention devoted to early education at New Lanark. Owen’s interest embraced all ages, delivering a progressive curriculum with innovative teaching methods partly derived from Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi. Evening schools and uplifting lectures that typified Owenite communities were also linked to his citizenship agenda, which emphasized social responsibility, communal action, care for the environment, and so far as it went, democratic participation in government.

His educational objectives also fed into gender issues. The schools were open to girls and boys equally. Owen promoted equality and called for the reform of marriage and the marriage property laws. He favored birth control as a means of liberating women.

Owen is regarded as a significant pioneer of welfarism, which found expression at New Lanark in environmental improvements, better housing, education, medical care, and social benefits in sickness and old age.

Although this was later implemented by other philanthropic employers and promoted by workers' organizations, Owen's comprehensive system, albeit linked to education, was undoubtedly pioneering and influential.

Owen's vision of co-operation began with the attack on poverty, which would be alleviated because community members would not compete but contribute to the common wealth. Although the arrangements about labor values, shares, and rewards were confused, Owen saw the communities resembling modern public-private partnerships with members ultimately becoming shareholder owners. Other Owenite organizations had a strong co-operative ethos, though the links to consumer co-operatives, while widely celebrated, are more tenuous.

Finally, there are strong environmental messages about the use of natural and human resources in Owen's agenda. He was able to balance commercial success as a mill owner with principles of welfare, education, and housing and broader environmental concerns, harnessing power and natural resources not only to make money but also to benefit workers and the community.

Although this could be seen as mere corporate philanthropy, Owen promoted an alternative view to the dominant ideology of laissez-faire that was of considerable long-term significance. It influenced developments in industrial relations, education, welfare, and co-operation, and many reform issues later embraced by the Liberal and Labour parties in Britain and by social democrats in the United States and Europe. Owen's ideas on education, citizenship, welfare, and sustainability, revisited in recent scholarship, certainly remain highly relevant in modern democracies.

Ian Donnachie

See also [Communism](#), [Varieties of](#), [Communitarianism and Liberalism](#); [Fabianism](#); [Fourier, Charles](#); [Mill, John Stuart](#); [Saint-Simon, Henri de](#); [Social Democracy](#); [Socialism](#); [Welfare State](#), [Theories of the](#)

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Ronald J. Sider Ronald J. Sider

Pacifism

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Pacifism

The word *pacifism* normally means opposition to all war, indeed all intentional killing of human beings. Although opposition to war is ancient, the word “pacifism” was coined in 1901 (Cortright 2008, 8).

There are many varieties of pacifism: religious and secular as well as passive and activist. American Mennonite theologian John Howard Yoder distinguished 18 varieties of religious pacifism in *Nevertheless* (1971). Others, such as American political scientist Gene Sharp, promote nonviolent alternatives on purely secular, pragmatic grounds. Because, for so many, the word “pacifist” has acquired passive connotations of acquiescence to injustice, many contemporary pacifists prefer to speak of activist nonviolence or nonviolent direct action.

Within all major world religions—Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Christianity—a pacifist tradition has emerged. Almost always, however, the pacifist community has been a minority voice within its own religious tradition. The history of Christianity illustrates this pattern.

For the first 300 years, Christian writings were largely pacifist. There are a number of references to war and killing in extant Christian writings from these early centuries, and almost unanimously they say that Christians must never kill another person. Repeatedly they base this belief on Jesus’s command to love one’s enemies.

There is evidence, however, that by the third century, there were increasing numbers of Christians in the Roman army, although the historical evidence is too incomplete for historians to know the numbers with any precision. In the early fourth century, the Emperor Constantine embraced Christianity, and by the end of that century, the great North African theologian, Augustine, bishop of Hippo, had begun to articulate what came to be called the just war doctrine. Under limited circumstances when certain criteria are met, it is right for Christians to fight wars for peace and justice. Since the fourth century, this just war position has been the majority Christian view.

Throughout the centuries, to be sure, a minority Christian pacifist voice arose. During the sixteenth-century Reformation in Europe, fairly large numbers of Anabaptists (later divided among Hutterites, Mennonites, and Amish) embraced pacifism, and some were executed by both Catholic and Protestant rulers. In the seventeenth century, another emerging Christian group called the Quakers embraced pacifism. By the early twentieth century, a number of smaller Christian pacifist bodies had emerged.

After World War I, a significant number of theologically liberal Protestants abandoned their just war tradition and became pacifists. That movement provoked a stinging rebuke from Reinhold Niebuhr, the most distinguished Christian political theologian of the mid-twentieth century. Denouncing this theologically liberal pacifism as grounded in a naïve view of human nature as basically good rather than distorted by selfishness, Niebuhr's 1940 essay "Why the Christian Church Is Not Pacifist" checked this rising pacifism and helped prepare for the American entry into the battle against Adolf Hitler.

In the last 50-plus years, pacifism has slowly gained some strength. One significant reason is the emergence of an activist pacifism that achieved stunning success in the nonviolent campaigns of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Gandhi, a Hindu pacifist, led the successful struggle for Indian independence against British colonial rule. His successful nonviolent struggle against Britain led to the death of only 1 in every 400,000 Indians, whereas Algeria's violent overthrow of French colonialism resulted in the death of one in every ten Algerians. In the United States, Martin Luther King, Jr. led a nonviolent civil-rights campaign that overturned racist

structures and changed American society. Gandhi and King are the most visible practitioners of this new activist nonviolence, but numerous lesser known nonviolent campaigns overthrew dictators. Then, toward the end of the twentieth century, a largely spontaneous nonviolent uprising brought down President Ferdinand Marcos, who had ruled the Philippines for decades as a vicious dictator; and Solidarity, an independent union and resistance movement in communist Poland, used activist nonviolence to bring down Poland's communist government and contribute to the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

Meanwhile, in academic theological circles in the United States, pacifism was regaining a serious hearing. Yoder's *Politics of Jesus* (1972) was read widely and exercised substantial influence in Catholic, mainline Protestant, and evangelical Protestant circles as well as in Yoder's own Mennonite community. Yoder's influence contributed to the embrace of pacifism by Methodist Stanley Hauerwas, one of the most prominent of the ethicists and theologians writing today in the United States. Increasing numbers of Catholics have become pacifists, although the just war tradition still dominates both Catholic and Protestant circles.

Also significant is the emergence of a third stance, "just peacemaking," articulated especially by Glen Stassen, a Baptist and professor of ethics at Fuller Theological Seminary. Without trying to settle the long argument between pacifists and just war advocates, just peacemaking brings both groups together to advocate concrete, nonviolent steps toward peace.

Pacifists exercise very little influence on American politics and foreign policy. Often, they join just war adherents to oppose specific wars or military expenditures. The campaign for a World Peace Tax Fund (which would allow taxpayers to direct that portion of their taxes that would otherwise fund military expenditures to this peace fund) has attracted only a small, albeit slowly growing, number of co-sponsors. Pacifism remains a small minority voice in American religious and public life.

Ronald J. Sider

See also [Gandhi, Mohandas \(Mahatma\)](#); [King, Martin Luther, Jr.](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [War and Political Thought](#)

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Mark Philp Mark Philp

Paine, Thomas

Paine, Thomas

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Paine, Thomas

Thomas Paine's major contributions are to the theory of representative government, the justification of welfare provision and a basic income, the development of the concept of natural rights, and the spread of popular deism in the nineteenth century.

Thomas Paine (1737–1809) was born to a family of moderate means in Norfolk, England, and led a checkered life with little achievement until he emigrated to America in 1774. Within two years, his *Common Sense* (1776) made him the most influential pamphleteer of the American Revolution. Written in a direct and lively style, it denounced the decaying despotisms of Europe and pilloried hereditary monarchy as an absurdity; in contrast, America was presented as the natural resting place for freedom and as a country in which the law is king. At a time when many still hoped for reconciliation with Britain, *Common Sense* touted the inevitability of separation.

Paine consolidated his reputation as a pamphleteer with his series of *American Crisis* letters (1777–83); he also served in a number of capacities for Congress and the Pennsylvanian Assembly. In the early, dark hours of the American Revolution, General George Washington had Paine's *The American Crisis* (1777) read to his desperate troops to rally their spirits. After the Revolution Paine dedicated his time to scientific experiments, designing an iron bridge capable of spanning wide distances without the use of piers. In 1787 he took his model to Paris, where he became caught up in

the initial events of the French Revolution and was later arrested for his efforts. When Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) appeared, Paine determined to answer it. *Rights of Man* (1791–92) couples a narrative of French events with a trenchant attack on Burke and the Revolution Settlement of 1688. Distinguishing between natural rights for which our power to exercise them is perfect (freedom of conscience), and those for which it is imperfect so that we need government to enforce them (property), Paine argues that there are many areas in which government has no proper authority. Its only role is to support people's rights. Against Burke, he argues that no generation has the right to alienate the rights of later generations; rather, each generation has the right to determine for itself the form its government will take.

Visiting Paris in June 1791, in the immediate aftermath of Louis XVI's flight to Varennes, Paine jettisoned the tolerance for France's limited monarchy that had earlier that year marked his text. By contrast, the second part to *Rights of Man* (1792) is explicitly republican. It draws on his American experience to sketch the basic principles of a largely self-regulating commercial society, coupled with representative government, the rule of law, and a periodically renewable covenant. The final chapter, influenced by his friendship with Condorcet and other members of the Comité de Mendicité, outlines a program for a welfare state.

Combined, the two parts of *Rights of Man* sold in unprecedented numbers. Paine's reliance on natural rights, his attacks on mixed government, and his republicanism set him apart from the British opposition's political rhetoric and the emphasis on English liberties. His popularity suggests that he was reaching an audience who attached diminishing weight to these traditions and were struck by his insistence on citizens' essential equality and their right to challenge the status quo. He was prosecuted for sedition and outlawed—but by this time he had returned to France, having been elected to the National Convention in the summer of 1792.

Paine's association with Girondin leaders in Paris, and his plea for clemency for Louis, led to his imprisonment in 1793, and he narrowly escaped execution. His *Age of Reason* (1793–94) was being passed to publishers in France and England as he was arrested. It is a powerful piece

of deist literature, coupled with an attack on the authority of the Bible and organized religion that succeeded in dividing many of Paine's English supporters, scandalizing readers in America, and establishing a republican deist current in British radicalism that lasted well into the nineteenth century.

In 1796, responding to the attempted coup by François-Noël Babeuf's "conspiracy of equals," Paine's *Agrarian Justice* set out a principled case for a tax on inheritance so as to provide a capital grant for all reaching the age of majority, together with an annual pension for all at 50, arguing that the Earth is common property to the human race and that everyone is owed compensation for the private appropriation of it.

Paine finally left France for America in 1803, during the Peace of Amiens, but he was vilified on his return for his radicalism, his deism, and his embittered attack on Washington, whom Paine blamed for failing to lobby for his release under the Terror. He died in obscurity in 1809.

Mark Philp

See also [American Political Thought](#); [Burke, Edmund](#); [Citizenship](#); [Constitutionalism](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [French Revolution](#), [Political Thought of the](#); [Radicalism](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Republicanism](#); [Revolution](#); [Rights](#), [Natural and Human](#); [State](#), [Theories of the](#); [Welfare State](#), [Theories of the](#)

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Joy Hendrickson Hoda Zaki Joy Hendrickson and Hoda Zaki

Pan-Africanism

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Pan-Africanism

Pan-Africanism was born from a bond of solidarity among Africans and their descendants who shared a common condition imposed by the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and its aftermath. It grew as a result of colonialism and its racist ideology and was further developed with the advent of African countries' independence in the mid-twentieth century. Pan-Africanism is a loosely knit and sometimes contradictory constellation of ideas, organizations, and movements that transcend national borders.

The ideals that distinguish Pan-Africanism include the need for Africa to unify for the greater economic, political, and social good of all Africans; the existence of an African personality; the vital connections between continental Africans and Africans in the diaspora; the necessity to protest racism and to assert the contributions of African civilizations; the need to remove all vestiges of colonialism; and the desire for human dignity. Each of these ideas was developed at different times for a variety of political ends, and no one Pan-Africanist will subscribe to all of its ideas. Pan-Africanism includes a cultural dimension in that artists have turned to the continent as a source of their inspiration.

Pan-Africanism's roots are to be found in the experiences of Africans enslaved in the New World. Olaudah Equiano was among the first to assert an identity that was continental in scope. His autobiography, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa the African* (1789), described the horrors of slavery and was used by abolitionists. He

became a spokesman for the enslaved and urged European powers to develop Africa without exploiting its human resources.

Other early Pan-Africanist leaders promoted emigration to West Africa as a solution to the racism they endured. Paul Cuffee of the United States, whose father was African and mother Native American, founded a settlement in Sierra Leone, a colony established by British authorities for the formerly enslaved. In 1868, Sierra Leonean James Horton proposed the development of modern independent African nations based on the traditional ethnic communities. Emigration to Liberia was supported by organizations such as the American Colonization Society. Edward Blyden became a citizen of the newly independent Liberia when he moved there from his birthplace in the Caribbean island of St. Thomas, and he is considered to be one of the greatest explicators of Pan-African concepts. His disciple, J. E. Casely Hayford of the Gold Coast, spoke of an international feeling among all black people and established a National Congress of British West Africa. Both Blyden and Hayford were cultural nationalists who supported the movement of independent churches in West Africa and believed in the glorious past and future of the continent, or “Ethiopia.”

Other advocates of back-to-Africa emigration included Henry McNeal Turner, a bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and Marcus Garvey. Garvey, originally from Jamaica, moved to the United States and founded the United Negro Improvement Association, a mass movement in the twentieth century that promoted racial pride and economic advancement. Garveyism was to influence a number of continental Africans, most notably Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana who used Garvey’s Black Star symbol on Ghana’s national flag. Other theorists included historian C. L. R. James of Trinidad, who focused on the exploitation of labor in Africa and the diaspora, and Walter Rodney of Guyana, who documented Europe’s underdevelopment of Africa.

As founding father of Pan-Africanism, W. E. B. Du Bois organized many Pan-African congresses to bring together Africans, African Americans, and West Indians to discuss mutual problems and to pressure colonial governments to allow for greater self-determination for their colonies. The first Pan-African Congress took place in 1900 in London, and others

followed in 1919, 1921, 1923, and 1927. The Sixth Pan-African Congress held in Manchester, England, in 1945 marked a turning point. Many of the attendees were students who were to become the leaders of their countries, including Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana), Jomo Kenyatta (Kenya), and S. L. Akintola (Nigeria). After 1945, Pan-Africanism's leadership shifted to Africans and subsequent congresses were held on African soil.

While the West African Student Union in London kept the ideas of Pan-Africanism alive, African and West Indian students from France's colonies founded the Society for African Culture. They developed the concept of "Negritude," a theory that espoused a distinctly African way of confronting the world. The scholarly journal *Présence Africaine*, with Alioune Diop as its editor, was established as part of this movement. Léopold Senghor, a poet and the future leader of independent Senegal, saw the Pan-African aspect of Negritude in terms of a bond of psychological identification among a people with the same origins who yet display a diversity of cultural attributes. For him, there was a basic core of values that are maintained, but modifications have occurred over time and distance as Africans traveled across the Atlantic and throughout Africa. This cultural component of Pan-Africanism was easier to organize and sustain than the more contentious political side.

Culturally, Pan-Africanism exerted a global influence. The Harlem Renaissance emphasized Africa's significance. Artists such as Josephine Baker, Claude McKay, and Paul Robeson affirmed a pride in Africa and a global connection between all Africans. The Harlem Renaissance influenced African and West Indian artists such as Fela Kuti of Nigeria and Bob Marley of Jamaica, who developed new musical genres that influenced artists globally and expressed Pan-African sentiments. Today we see the continuing influence of Pan-Africanism in North America in celebrations such as Kwanzaa, a celebration of African culture established in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga, professor of Africana Studies at California State University, Long Beach.

In post-independent Africa, unity splintered and solidarity waned. The sentimental aspect of Pan-Africanism dissolved with the Cold War and the tenacity with which colonial powers maintained their colonies. South Africa

and Rhodesia were reminders of the need to rid the continent of the worst manifestation of colonial ideology. The Pan-African visions for the continent of theorists and activists like Frantz Fanon (Algeria) and Amílcar Cabral (Guinea Bissau) could not be realized without bloodshed. Others called for a more cautious approach.

Pan-Africanism influenced states' foreign policies, most notably Ghana's under Nkrumah and Egypt's under Nasser. Nkrumah's visions for unity included the entire continent. According to Nkrumah, African cultures had merged customs of many ethnic groups into what he called the African personality. Thus, Africa needed to unify under one government and have a military high command. Only then could it assert itself on the international stage. Nasser's foreign policy reconceptualized Egypt as an African country that had responsibilities to defend the continent from external aggression.

The divisions between leaders would only allow for the laying of the foundation for a Pan-African institution that would, at some distant future, lead to political union. The Organization of African Unity was established in 1963 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and it represented a more moderate Pan-Africanism that sought to promote decolonization and development. Its member states, however, enjoyed full sovereign rights. In 2002 the OAU was disbanded and its successor, the African Union was established, which continues to promote the welfare of all Africans.

Joy Hendrickson

Hoda Zaki

See also [African Political Thought](#); [Empire and Political Thought](#); [Ethnicity and Political Thought](#); [Nationalism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Nyerere, Julius](#); [Race and Racism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Alasdair J. Marshall Alasdair J. Marshall

Pareto, Vilfredo

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Pareto, Vilfredo

Vilfredo Federico Damaso Pareto (1848–1923) helped lay the foundations for modern economics during the late nineteenth century. He then broadened his focus within social theory to embark on an ambitious (and still controversial) sociological project that has made important contributions (alongside works by Gaetano Mosca and Robert Michels) to classical elite theory, a school of thought emphasizing the inevitability of elite rule. An enduring influence on Pareto's sociological imagination was Niccolò Machiavelli, whose psychological realism famously viewed princes as “lions” or “foxes,” and whose functionalist thought viewed princely success or failure as hinging on the adaptivities of leonine and vulpine outlooks to changing times. These ideas led Pareto to theorize an endless “circulation of elites” (Pareto [1901] 1968). Pareto went on to situate his elite theory within a much broader macrosociological framework, called “general sociology,” which emphasized the roles played by political and economic elites in driving or resisting general social change (Pareto [1916] 1935). Pareto's general sociology referred to history as a “graveyard of aristocracies” (Pareto [1916] 1935, §2053). Elite failure in adapting to changing social conditions was theorized to have precipitated elite downfall and replacement many times down the centuries. In his last major sociological work (Pareto [1921] 1984), Pareto developed a more predictive theory of social change, concerned with properties of social systems that determine whether, and at what pace, elite adaptations occur.

Pareto's sociological concerns reflect his life experiences. His ancestors were wealthy Genoan merchants loyal to liberal republicanism. Political activism led his father, the Marquis Raffaele Pareto, a prominent follower of Giuseppe Mazzini, into temporary exile in France, where Vilfredo was born in July 1848. Italian unification soon made it safe for the family to return to Italy. Vilfredo graduated at the top of his class at the Polytechnic Institute in Turin, where he studied mathematics and engineering. His 1869 baccalaureate dissertation, theorizing solid bodies as systems of interacting parts held in equilibrial balance, would later inspire his sociological vision (*contra* Marxist and other forms of reductionist explanation) of social forms as dynamic systems in complex equilibria that interlink polity, economy, and society.

During the long liberal period that followed Italian unification, Pareto worked first as a consulting civil engineer on Italy's newly nationalized railroads and then as general superintendent of three iron mines. Having made influential political acquaintances in Florence (notably among the Peruzzi family), Pareto was inspired to follow the family tradition as a liberal activist. However, what he saw around him seemed to betray the progressive hopes of Italy's liberal reformers. In Italy's rapidly modernizing polity and economy, "corruption" had become a commonplace accusation leveled against politicians and government officials. Pareto's simple psychological characterizations of vulpine elites as elites that use "fraud" to gain and maintain power could therefore appeal to the political common sense of the day. Italy's drift toward government favoritism and military expansionism, according to Pareto, was wholly at odds with how liberal economies should operate. A devout free-marketeer, impressed by the Manchester School liberalism he witnessed on business visits to the United Kingdom, Pareto wrote hundreds of pamphlets and made heated public speeches calling for free trade and pacifism. He stood unsuccessfully as a parliamentary candidate in 1881.

Papers pioneering mathematical approaches to economics won Pareto the respect of the economist Maffeo Pantaleoni. In 1893, he succeeded Léon Walras as professor of economics at Lausanne University. Pareto's first major work, the (1896–97) *Course in Political Economics*, proposed his "law of income distribution," which claimed that the elite 20 percent of

every society takes 80 percent of its income. Inspired by the idea that economic phenomena like this are only explicable within broader social and political contexts, Pareto began to develop his general sociology. This sociological voyage always remained bound up with the study of elite rule. Pareto would continually stress (in line with Machiavelli's view of *homo politicus* as a power seeker, and as a challenge to the Marxist belief in proletarian class dictatorship leading to communist utopia where political power is no longer necessary) not only the grim inevitability of elite rule but also the foolishness and vulnerability of those who manage to retain power. The emancipatory hopes of nineteenth-century Marxism and liberalism here gave way to a historical pessimism emphasizing that humanity does not learn from its mistakes, and that social forms do not so much progress in linear fashion as alternate endlessly between phases of austerity and prosperity.

Pareto's sociology reflects Italy's modernization pains. The Machiavellian-Paretian strategy of vulpine "fraud" resonated within Italian consciousness because it manifested in the widely resented practices of *trasformismo* (where cabinet ministers would survive government changeovers by opportunistically switching allegiances and policy preferences) and *clientelismo* (where the allegiances of elected politicians that mattered most were not those toward electors in general but those toward key "Grand Electors" who most influenced political candidate selection and voting behavior). The Machiavellian-Paretian strategy of leonine "force" was also important for political commentators insofar as it seemed to underlie the widespread street violence that saw Italy's communists pitted against those proto-fascist activists who would eventually coalesce as Mussolini's "Blackshirts." Pareto's sociological sensemaking took place when democratic elites stood at the brink of overthrow by both extremist movements. For Pareto this was fundamentally not a conflict between left and right but between established elites who instinctually preferred "fraud" and rival elites who instinctually preferred "force" in their efforts to maintain or seize power. There will come a time, he wrote, "when the lion will reach the fox with a well-aimed cuff" (Pareto [1916] 1935, §2480, footnote). Pareto's Machiavellian characterizations of political actors remain tantalizing. Raymond Aron (1967, 171) suggests that at the "living heart" of Paretian thought we find the idea that each political human is

either selfish (like the rapacious, materialistic, and fraudulent fox) or naive (like the violent, ideologically zealous, and gullible lion).

Alasdair J. Marshall

See also [Aron, Raymond](#); [Class](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Equality and Egalitarianism](#); [Fascism](#); [Italian Political Thought](#); [Michels, Robert](#); [Mosca, Gaetano](#); [Political Sociology](#); [Progress](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Gregory Hammond Gregory Hammond

Peronism

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Peronism

Peronism is an Argentine political movement named after Juan Domingo Perón (1895–1974), President of Argentina from 1946 to 1955 and from 1973 to 1974. Peronism, also known as Justicialism, is the official doctrine and platform of the *Partido Justicialista* (Justicialist Party) or the Peronist Party. It combines elements of corporatism, socialism, and nationalism; scholars have identified the Catholic labor doctrines of the papal encyclicals *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadregesimo Anno* and the works of Carl von Clausewitz as specific intellectual influences on Perón's political philosophy. Perón also cited historical military-political figures such as Lycurgus of Sparta, Julius Caesar, and Napoleon Bonaparte as his influences.

The tenets of Peronism emerged after Perón's ascension to the presidency in 1946 and were greatly shaped by the process of that rise. Perón was a career military man who participated in two coups—the first in 1930 and the second in 1943. In the interim, he had served as an instructor in the military academy in Buenos Aires and as military attaché in Italy at the beginning of World War II. During this period he wrote essays that served as the basis of his later doctrine. After the 1943 coup, in which he was a prominent co-conspirator, he served as secretary of labor, using this position to build a support base in the labor movement. It was during this period that Perón's ideology first became widely known. Perón's critics labeled him a fascist, and in October 1945, he was forced out of the government and arrested. The ensuing general strike on October 17, 1945, by Perón's supporters is still

remembered as the most important protest in the nation's history, and during Perón's administration, its commemoration became a national holiday. This successful protest and Perón's subsequent election cemented his commitment to the interests of labor and set the direction of his ideology.

Perón and his administration spent the remainder of his first presidency (ending in his overthrow in September 1955) refining the ideology described alternately as "Peronism" or "Justicialism" and propagating it through the nation's media and educational institutions. Perón defined his philosophy as a "third way"—an alternative to both the "materialist individualism" represented by the United States and the "statist exploitation" exemplified by the Soviet Union. Peronism thus struck a nationalist tone in the context of the Cold War. According to Perón, Peronism was fundamentally rooted in spiritual values in the Catholic Christian sense, and religious imagery often permeated Peronist rhetoric. The greatest emphasis, however, was on the ideas of "organized community" and "social justice." In describing these concepts, Perón's favorite phrase was "spiritual unity"—the idea that all members of the movement share not only a common set of values but also, in his own phrasing, a common soul. In practice, this entailed the creation of state-sponsored organizations to which all members of society would belong, such as labor organizations or the community organizations created by Maria Eva Duarte de Perón (Evita).

After the coup of September 1955, Perón was forced to flee Argentina, and over the next 17 years, Peronism underwent a prolonged transformation. Within Argentina, those in power alternately attempted to appeal to Perón's supporters or suppress them, while these same supporters attempted to engineer his return. After the Cuban Revolution of 1959, younger Argentines combined their notions of Marxism with their antagonism toward the governments in power, creating a new brand of Peronism that embraced a more radical left-wing ideology. With Perón's return to power in 1973, these two generations of Peronists came into direct conflict, particularly after Perón's death in 1974. In 1976, the military once again seized power and brutally suppressed all political discourse in the nation.

After the return of civilian government in 1983, the *Partido Justicialista* regained its position as the dominant party of the nation. Although the policies of Peronist governments have varied over the subsequent 30 years, they have all continued to wield the imagery of Juan and Evita Perón in order to rally support and, thus, have used the philosophy of Peronism to guide their official platform.

Scholarly discussion of Peronism began in the aftermath of the 1955 coup. Many of these works debated whether or not Peronism merited the name “ideology” as opposed to being a mask for Perón’s desire to rule as he pleased. Significant works in this area include Torcuato Di Tella’s articles “Populismo y Reforma en América Latina” and “La búsqueda de la fórmula política argentina,” Daniel James’s *Resistance and Integration: Peronism and the Argentine Working Class, 1946–1976*, David Rock’s *Authoritarian Argentina*, and James Brennan’s *Peronism and Argentina*.

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See also [Community](#); [Fascism](#); [Ideology](#); [Latin American Political Thought](#); [Nationalism](#); [Socialism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Keith Tribe Keith Tribe

Physiocracy

Physiocracy

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Physiocracy

Physiocracy was a mid-eighteenth-century school of economic thought that emphasized agriculture as the source of national wealth and, consequently, held that such wealth should not be seen as a stock of gold or money but as an annual flow of revenue. Originally developed by François Quesnay (physician to Madame de Pompadour) and the Comte de Mirabeau in the later 1750s, it was developed more systematically and named as such in the later 1760s.

The most striking monument to physiocracy is the *Tableau Économique*, first published in 1758–59 and then widely disseminated in a condensed form as part of Mirabeau's *Philosophie rurale* (1763). The *Tableau* is a zigzag diagram of the exchanges of goods and money arising among three distinct economic classes—agricultural producers, landed proprietors, and manufacturers—beginning with a transfer from the first to the second of the entire annual net product of the land. The proprietors return half of this revenue to the agricultural sector as purchases of food and wine and transfer the other half as “sterile expenditures” to the manufacturers of luxury goods, who then in turn spend half of their income on food and wine and the other half on manufactured goods—and so on through the year, until the entire system runs down to nothing and the next harvest starts the sequence once more.

Quesnay's diagram embodied many of the leading features of physiocracy. It treated the process of production and exchange as an autonomous, natural

order—hence the name—which functions most effectively if left to work freely—“laissez-faire” being the watchword adopted by Quesnay and Mirabeau. Agriculture being the source of this process, manufacturing was treated as “sterile,” incapable of creating the net product that sets the system in motion. Consequently, all taxation should be levied directly on this net product in the form of a single agricultural tax. These last two features formed the principal part of contemporary criticism, although in *Wealth of Nations* (1776), Adam Smith praised the system because of its emphasis on the annual production of wealth (a key idea in *Wealth of Nations*) and the presumption that a “system of natural liberty” was required for it to function effectively. Smith did however clearly reject the notion that agricultural labor was uniquely productive and that manufacturing labor was unproductive.

Summarizing the features of the “new science” in 1768, Pierre Samuel du Pont de Nemours argued that among the natural rights of man was the right to provide for his own subsistence, together with property in his person and the products of his labor. He later insisted that, “without property, no liberty; without liberty, no security.” This principle was explicitly linked by the physiocrats to support for freedom of trade in grain, arguing that this would stimulate domestic producers, bringing with it also the prospect of importing luxury products in exchange for the products of French agriculture, increasing the disposable net product (and hence tax revenue) while limiting the activities of the sterile class and, in this manner, preserving the balance between the classes that the *Tableau* was designed to express. This stance on the grain trade therefore opposed contemporary protectionist policy and implied a generalization of domestic free trade to the international level.

As the school won converts, discussion moved away from the optimal organization of an agricultural economy toward more general disquisitions on natural law, elaborating the philosophical underpinnings of the policy regime. Although France did temporarily adopt free trade in grain, the opposition with which this met from both the public and the administration led to a reversal of the policy in the early 1770s. A promise of greater welfare in the long run could nowhere overwhelm a fear of shortage in the

short run. And in a predominantly agricultural economy, it is in the short run that one either lives, or starves.

Although the movement became more muted in France by the 1770s, its principles were not without influence abroad. Spain adopted grain liberalization in 1765 on the Physiocratic mode; Mirabeau advised the ruler of Tuscany; and in Germany several indigenous “Physiokraten” sought to promote the doctrine during the 1770s. It was in Germany that the most thoroughgoing attempt was made, in the state of Baden, to adapt the fiscal regime to physiocratic requirements, and here again the ruler entered into a lengthy correspondence with Mirabeau over both principles and practice.

Keith Tribe

See also [Capitalism](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Property, Theories of](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Smith, Adam](#)

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Dennis Hardy Dennis Hardy

Planning

Planning

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Planning

Planning is a generic term that is used in different contexts, ranging from governments to businesses and individuals.

Although all governments have to plan to some degree (for budgets, defense, infrastructure, etc.), the *extent* to which they do so varies according to political dogma. Those nations that are most committed to planning are likely to be socialist (including national socialist) or communist regimes. Most famously, the former Soviet Union was based on principles of Marxism-Leninism and espoused the idea of total planning. By means of central control, it was contended that resources could be allocated efficiently and equitably. Although the theory might have seemed faultless, in practice planning in fine detail on a large scale is difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. The collapse of the Soviet Union was seen by many as evidence of the shortcomings of centralized planning.

In contrast, other governments have followed a different ideological path, seeking to limit the role of the state and allow the market to allocate resources. The view is that decisions are better made by individuals and corporations rather than through a system of central planning. Generally, such regimes can be classified as liberal or neoliberal (in the sense of an approach that champions free trade and individual rights) and the economic system that is favored is capitalist. The reality is that even the most fervent adherents of this approach have found it difficult to undo what is already in place, with the result that in modern economies, government intervention

tends to increase. An interesting variant of laissez-faire is anarchism, which also opposes “big government” but at the same time rejects capitalism as the prevailing system. Some anarchists are not opposed to planning *per se* so long as it is community-based. Instead of top-down planning, their approach is bottom up, with localized decisions coalescing through a federal structure.

In a more focused context, the term “planning” is used to denote various forms of land-use control. Descriptors such as town and country (or urban and rural), regional, and environmental all define different fields of application.

Modern versions of land-use planning date from the nineteenth century in response to the adverse effects of unregulated urban growth resulting from large-scale industrialization. One kind of response was through model settlements to show how better living and working conditions could be achieved through purposeful action. Some of the more radical idealists at the time (such as Robert Owen) argued that their schemes could not fully be achieved in a capitalist system. Others, however, built well-planned industrial villages (such as Bournville in England and Margarethenhöhe in Germany) to demonstrate that social improvement and capitalism could, indeed, go hand in hand.

In contrast, a more broad-based approach saw legislation as the priority. By the middle of the nineteenth century, reformers were promoting measures to ameliorate the worst aspects of unplanned development. Public health and housing campaigns, in particular, led governments to introduce new laws and the appointment of officials to enforce them. Germany and Britain both saw the earliest advances, and it was the British Parliament that in 1909 passed the first town planning legislation. It was quite narrowly based, but progressively, coverage was extended and variations on the general theme of planning were adopted in most countries around the world. Its global spread in the twentieth century is widely considered to be a mark of human progress, and indeed, there have been various exemplars in the form of new towns, the curbing of urban sprawl, and protection of natural environments. Some of the best examples are to be found in the Scandinavian countries. In the context of an ever-rising world population, diminishing natural

resources, and the prospect of climate change, planning is now closely identified with goals of sustainability.

Despite its widespread adoption, planning is also open to serious criticism. For one thing, planning decisions are often shown to favor those who control the process rather than the rest of the community. A second, related, point is that—because of the financial gains that can result from a change of land use—planning is too often tainted with evidence of corruption. Third, the very application of land-use controls limits the supply of land, resulting in higher costs for housing and other development. Finally, on a global scale, planning has proved to be a relatively blunt instrument to cope with the present rate and complexity of urban growth. Cities in many parts of the world are growing at an exponential rate, so much so that most people are now urban dwellers. Planning, however, has so far proved unequal to the challenge.

Dennis Hardy

See also [Anarchism](#); [Bureaucracy](#); [Capitalism](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Environmentalism](#), [Ecology](#), and [Political Thought](#); [Justice](#); [Lenin and Leninism](#); [Liberalism](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Social Democracy](#); [Socialism](#); [Stalin and Stalinism](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Pluralism

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Pluralism

The adjective *plural* means, simply, “more than one,” and therefore, the noun *pluralism* refers to the “condition” of plurality—a situation characterized by its very lack of singularity. Although the adjective *plural* could be used to modify numerous grammatical objects (e.g., plural cats), within the context of political philosophy pluralism signifies a multiplicity of values, opinions, judgments, convictions, and beliefs. Pluralism points to a persistent state of variety or difference, and thus, it stands in contrast to absolutism (in politics), to fundamentalism (in religion), and to monism (in philosophy). Given this account, pluralism can be conceptualized in five distinct ways:

1. As an empirical-historical description of facts
2. As a metaphysical or moral philosophy
3. As a ground or a framing context for political theory
4. As a type of democracy
5. As a theory of the political

First, then, pluralism has a particular history in that both the idea of pluralism and the philosophical and political “problem” of pluralism emerge at a particular point in time. Many political philosophers attribute the first historical emergence of pluralism to the Protestant Reformation and the questions of religious tolerance that it raised: Toleration becomes an issue only after the emergence of a recognizable plurality of potentially acceptable religious beliefs takes shape in Europe in the sixteenth and

seventeenth centuries. This plurality of religious beliefs provides the context for the later appearance, especially in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, of “value pluralism.” Conceived widely, “value pluralism” denotes the historical existence of distinct and potentially competing systems of belief—be they religious, philosophical, moral, or political.

Second, however, a philosophy of pluralism conceives value pluralism in narrower and more specific terms. According to moral theory, “value pluralism” suggests not merely a multiplicity of values but an incommensurability as well. This argument begins with the claim that even at its most fundamental level, the universe itself proves to be *plural*. At the same time, these multiple sets of values or systems of belief necessarily conflict. Because there is no common metric to judge between or among values, value pluralism contends that different values cannot be ranked, and the conflict between them cannot be reasonably adjudicated. Ultimately, there can be no logical or philosophical reason to choose one set of values over any other. The gap between them is incommensurable; the conflicts among them are irreconcilable. Therefore, a philosophy of pluralism must strictly reject any monist account of the world. Monism contends that all multiplicity is ultimately reducible to oneness, whereas pluralists insist that no such reduction is possible.

Third, then, *political* philosophers need not enter the debates over value pluralism; yet those debates provide the context for their project. John Rawls argued that any theory of justice must begin by accepting and responding to what he called the *fact* of reasonable pluralism. For Rawls, a free society will be marked not just by a plurality of values but by a plurality of *systemic, comprehensive, and reasonable* views. “Systemic” means that they are not mere tastes (which would be irrelevant to questions of justice); “comprehensive” means that they are a part of an overall worldview that an individual holds and that fundamentally shapes his or her identity; and “reasonable” means that the comprehensive worldviews cannot be reconciled within a single system. Thus, the question of politics becomes as follows: How might we devise a constitutional system based on principles of justice that recognize the indisputable facts of “reasonable pluralism”—how do we overcome the limits and constraints placed on a theory of justice by these background conditions?

Fourth, because pluralism implies both choice (of individuals) and multiplicity (of groups), we can see it as a type of modern democracy. Under a notion of “pluralist democracy” individuals and groups have the right to seek their own benefits but in such a way that may weaken the solidarity of the community as a whole. In Europe, decades of increased non-European immigration and the resulting unprecedented religious and ethnic diversity have created serious and unresolved social and political conflicts. In the United States, beginning in the 1950s—and drawing from the earlier “group theory” of Arthur Bentley (1908)—leading analysts of pluralism have problematized its effects on public policy and public life. Robert Dahl (1956) replaced what he saw as the fiction of majority rule with the reality of *minorities rule*, or polyarchy, a system in which a vast array of interest groups compete to shape public policy. Taking Dahl further, Theodore Lowi ([1969] 1979) concluded that the pluralistic system of Interest Group Liberalism had defaulted on traditional concerns about justice by defining as “just” whatever is the outcome of the competition among interest groups. Finally, Robert Putnam (2000) explored the progressive loss of social capital—especially trust, communication, and social networks—that had traditionally underpinned the democratic and civic life of communities.

Fifth, pluralism can be conceptualized not as a limit to politics but as the very stuff of politics. This is a theory of politics as *pluralization*. In this approach, pluralism is not a problem to work around but something to embrace. Even a thinker as concerned as James Madison (1787) was about the factional downside of pluralism, replete with conflict and potential tyranny, argued for controlling its effects rather than, as Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1762) had proposed, trying to eliminate it and thus deny pluralistic liberty. In this tradition, pluralism is not a constraint but a goal. A theory of pluralization places difference, diversity, and even strife and conflict at the heart of the theory of politics. Politics becomes, then, not an effort to quell conflict, to search for consensus, or to overcome the problem of reasonable pluralism but an arena in which the politics of pluralism is played out—a space in which agonistic conflict and a spirit of pluralization are fostered and allowed to flourish.

Thus, by the twenty-first century, pluralism has come to be seen as either a political problem or a political solution; clearly we grasp it more accurately as a complex combination of the two.

Samuel A. Chambers

See also [Civil Society](#); [Communitarianism and Liberalism](#); [Constitutionalism](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Community](#); [Liberalism](#); [Madison, James](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Rawls, John](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Rousseau, Jean-Jacques](#); [Toleration](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Polish Political Thought

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Polish Political Thought

The partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795 between Prussia, Russia and Austria and the resulting lack of independence and national unity for 123 years have etched themselves deeply on Polish political thought. The national disaster was caused by the weakness of royal power and the dominance of the nobility (*szlachta*) in the Parliament (*Sejm*), which with its power of veto (*liberum veto*) could paralyze any sovereign decision. The May constitution (promulgated on May 3, 1791) had tried to remedy this “Golden Liberty” by abolishing the *liberum veto* and introducing the constitutional monarchy. Although it came too late to generate concrete effects, it was very important because it marks the maximum expression of currents of political thought influenced by the Enlightenment. However, the political ideas of the Enlightenment—whose main exponents were Roman Ignacy Franciszek Potocki (1750–1809), Hugo Kołłątaj (1750–1812), and Stanisław Małachowski (1736–1809), who inspired the May Constitution—were expressed in Poland not as an attempt to limit the sovereign power (which in fact was very weak) but as an attempt to remedy the anarchy as a result of the excessive use of *liberum veto* and of the dominance of the nobility. A more radical approach was taken by Stanisław Staszic (1755–1826) who defended the interests of the lower classes, especially the peasants, and was a supporter of laissez-faire and of the physiocrats’ thought, as well as of a republican constitution. *Stronnictwo hetmańskie*, or “Hetman’s party,” which was formed by the

enemies of the May Constitution and of the patriotic party, was pro-Russian and acted in defense of “Golden Liberty.”

Polish political thought after 1795 is marked by the experience of exile and enslavement. Between the two failed riots of 1830 and 1863, political Messianism spread. Founded by Józef Hoene-Wroński (1776–1853), it was characterized by the close connection between spiritualist philosophical speculation and faith in the metaphysical significance of the Polish nation, seen as the vanguard for the liberation of oppressed peoples. Its most important representatives were the poet Adam Mickiewicz (1798–1855), August Cieszkowski (1814–94), and Karol Libelt (1807–75).

The defeat of the revolution of 1863 led to the end of the Messianic illusions and to a political return to realism, which was philosophically expressed by Polish positivism. In the new conditions, the positivists maintained their loyalty to the three occupying powers. Aleksander Świątochowski (1849–1938) proposed the program of “organic work,” consisting of the importance attributed to a methodical activity devoted to the education of the young generations and to foster the civil and economic progress of the country.

A more conservative trend was represented by the intellectuals and politicians who were called “stancists” (*stańczycy*—from the name of political pamphlets titled *Teka Stańczyka*, “Stańczyk’s briefcase”), who criticized the attempts to achieve independence and supported collaboration with the occupants as the only way to ensure a gradual sociopolitical evolution of the country, controlled and guided by the elite.

In this period also Socialist and Marxist thought developed in the territories of Poland, but this school of thought underestimated the problem of national independence, seen as an instrument of reactionary classes aiming to divide the proletariat. The most significant thinkers were the social-revolutionary Ludwik Waryński (1856–89) and the social-democratic Stanisław Krusiński (1857–86). A more original approach was the “philosophy of praxis” of Stanisław Brzozowski (1878–1911), who insisted on the “subjectivist” factor in history, against any kind of economic determinism. As a result of this, he was seen as a forerunner of the ideas of the so-called “Western Marxism.” The political thought of Kazimierz

Kelles-Krauz (1872–1905) was instead strongly influenced by positivism; his so-called “law of retrospective revolution” maintains that the ideals of a new reform movement are always similar to the ones of the past, whether recent or distant. On the other hand, the socialism of Edward Abramowski (1868–1918) veered toward a conception of anarcho-syndicalist politics; he stressed the importance of self-organization of the masses in the form of the cooperative.

After the achievement of national unity at the end of World War I, the main political topic was no longer that of independence, but the construction of a strong state, able to withstand its powerful neighbors. The political debate had two reference points vying with each other, both with a conservative outlook: Marshal Józef Piłsudski (1867–1935) and Stanisław Roman Dmowski (1864–1939). Supporters of the first (such as Adolf Bocheński, 1909–44) shared hostility toward Russia, the idea of the need for a strong executive power, and the project of a Polish republic as a federation of nations of central and eastern Europe, not as a nation-state, recovering the old idea of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Dmowski, the founder of the Polish school of political realism and responsibility, stressed the need to accept the modern rationalist and scientific world, and to abandon the obsolete nationalistic romanticism and the typical attachment to old values of the Poles. He believed that it was necessary to bring Poland into existence as a nation, freeing it from the burden of minority nationalities (i.e., the Jews, against whom he expressed a clear anti-Semitism), to build a “national state” with a single language and religion. Zygmunt Balicki (1858–1916) had similar ideas.

With the rise of communism after World War II, political theory was forced into a frame of an internal debate within Marxism. In the early years, Adam Schaff (1913–2006) was an important figure; after an initial membership of Stalinist orthodoxy, he gradually assumed a more open position and ended up becoming one of the leading representatives of humanistic Marxism. He was gradually embracing the positions of Leszek Kołakowski (1927–2009) known for so-called “Marxist revisionism,” stressing the importance of the moral judgment of the individual, which cannot be justified by historical necessity.

Socialist and Marxist ideas also were found in the writing of Ludwik Krzywicki (1859–1941), who proposed the idea of “historical substrate,” which stresses the strength of the institutions, beliefs, anthropological characteristics, and human “psychic races” in changing the general law of the historical process indicated by Marxism. Another of his conceptions is the theory of “migration of ideas,” according to which ideas can “migrate” (even in later times) from the country where they originated to other countries that because of their less developed social conditions are incapable of expressing these ideas autonomously.

The so-called “non-Marxist historical materialism” of Leszek Nowak (1943–2009) is the attempt to use an idealizing method to extend the dichotomy of capitalist/proletariat also to the dynamics of politics and culture, through oppositions of rulers/subjects and priests/believers. Another significant contribution is that of Jadwiga Staniszkis (1942), who criticized the myth of Solidarność and the theory of socialism and postcommunism as well as, more recently, the phenomenon of globalization.

The end of communism saw the rejection of Marxist political theories and a great opening toward the importation of Western thought, especially what was until then held on the fringes: neoliberalism, American neoconservatism, and the influences of Karl Popper and his ideas about open society. These Western strains of thought were often combined with indigenous traditions, such as neo-monarchist ideas. Among the most significant and young representatives of these trends are Marcin Król (b. 1944), Paweł Śpiewak (b. 1951), Jacek Bartyzel (b. 1956), Robert Gwiazdowski (b. 1960), and Marek Cichocki (b. 1966).

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See also [Communism](#), [Varieties of](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Globalization](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Neoconservatism](#); [Neoliberalism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Popper, Karl](#); [Republicanism](#); [Revolution](#); [Socialism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Political Culture

Political culture

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Political Culture

If politics poses the question of “who gets what, when, where, and how,” then political culture supplies a big part of the answer. If politics is the “art of the possible,” then political culture helps define the limits of that art, for culture defines what is generally permissible in a given society.

At its core, political culture—the shared values and beliefs of a group or society regarding political relationships and public policy—answers the question of how human beings are going to live together. That is, political culture answers the question of who gets to do what with and to whom under what circumstances. Political culture also answers the question of who decides, who has authority, and who has power in a group, organization, institution, or other social unit in society. In answering this latter set of questions, political culture also supplies much of the answer to the two prior questions about “who gets . . . ?” and “what is possible?” When elements of popular culture, high culture, and/or the culture studied by anthropologists are seen to impinge on or be entailed in political culture, then, arguably, they become part of the answer to these questions as well.

It is the political socialization process that produces and reproduces cultural attitudes about power, legitimacy, authority, and public policy. This process, by which political values and beliefs are instilled in citizens, is controlled and shaped by such interrelated authorities as parents, teachers and boards of education, clergy, business owners and media programmers, and public officials. These agents of political socialization determine what political

themes will prevail in the consciousness of citizens regarding the proper purpose of government, the role of ordinary citizens in the political process, the kinds of people who should be entrusted with decision-making authority, the political limits and possibilities of human nature, and the ways in which government should or should not be involved in economics, education, religion, and the family. In general, the prevailing political culture tends to help perpetuate the existing structure of power, but under certain circumstances, the opposite may be true. Political change, including revolution, is invariably preceded by a weakening or challenging of the existing political culture. And political culture can itself be a source of change when we conceive of countries and organizations as being composed of contending political subcultures.

Political culture has been and remains an important concept for many political scientists, and it will probably always be so. Aristotle, Charles-Louis Montesquieu, Alexis de Tocqueville, and other great students of politics sought to understand and explain political culture even when they did not use the term. Political scientists who have made political culture central to their research programs include Gabriel Almond, Harry Eckstein, Daniel Elazar, Ronald Inglehart, Robert Putnam, Sidney Verba, and Aaron Wildavsky. Almond and Verba's *The Civic Culture* (1963) and Putnam's *Making Democracy Work* (1993) and *Bowling Alone* (2000) are modern classics of political-cultural studies, and Elazar's *The American Mosaic* (1994) should become one.

In political-cultural studies, it has been common to focus on identifying the political attitudes, values, beliefs, and ideologies that are associated with and help explain the behaviors of certain individuals, groups, organizations, and institutions, and to study how the latter in turn contribute to the development of the former. Indeed, the complex, dynamic, and reciprocal relationships between psychological and cultural variables, on the one hand, and group and institutional variables, on the other, belie any simple or linear explanation of political cause and effect. Nonetheless, in many studies, political cultures are often characterized in nominal terms, so that analysts speak of the culture of countries, states, agencies, corporations, groups, and peoples.

Political scientists also frequently find it helpful to develop typologies of political culture and theories that help explain political-cultural similarities and differences in what would otherwise appear to be an incomparable, cacophonous array of entities and individuals. For example, Ronald Inglehart (1990) distinguishes materialistic from postmaterialistic political cultures; Daniel Elazar (1994) identifies individualistic, moralistic, and traditionalistic political cultures; and Aaron Wildavsky (Thompson, Ellis, and Wildavsky 1990; Wildavsky 1998, 2006) analyzes individualistic, egalitarian, hierarchical, and fatalistic political cultures.

The theories and types of political culture developed by these political scientists have stimulated a great deal of additional scholarly inquiry into political culture itself and into the related topics of political socialization, political psychology, and political economy.

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See also [Civil Society](#); [Conservatism](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Liberalism](#); [Montesquieu, Baron de](#); [Political Science and Political Thought](#); [Political Sociology](#); [Psychoanalysis and Political Thought](#); [Tocqueville, Alexis de](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Preston King Preston King

Political Philosophy and Political Thought

Political philosophy and political thought

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Political Philosophy and Political Thought

Political philosophy is parasitic upon political practice. The two, not identical, must be taken together. The most systematic of ancient philosophers characterized politics (knowledge of right conduct) as “the master science” (Aristotle, *Politics*). Such in *esse* is political philosophy, to which issues of public policy are central.

Sense

Political philosophy is given various names but has four key aspects:

1. sustained reflection on sociopolitical policy and organization;
2. emphasis on propositions of a general or universal type, and only particular where instantiating general or universal claims;
3. subordinate concern with descriptive or analytical generals and universals; and
4. predominant concern, not always express, with identifying the right and the good.

The fourth aspect (the evaluative, prescriptive, normative, ethical) is the subject’s cutting edge. Dazzling teeth, however, devoid of gums and bone, don’t bite. The saw of evaluation, prized from the haft of relevant facts and (especially) logic, cannot cut.

Propositions may be reduced to four basic types:

1. evaluative,
2. analytical,
3. empirical, and
4. aesthetic.

Various words pointing in slightly different directions are used to refer to these four types, but this entry does not address these variations. Basic disciplines can be classified, in part, with regard to the signal type of proposition each privileges. Leaving aesthetics aside, the cutting edge of political philosophy is evaluative (prescriptive, normative); that of physics is empirical (factual, descriptive); and that of mathematics is analytical (formal, logical).

While this classification of propositions helps to locate points of disciplinary divergence, “divergence” does not equal “mutual exclusion.” In the widely used expression *normative political philosophy*, the adjective, *normative*, implies only that political philosophy is distinctively evaluative, not that evaluation operates alone, on its own.

A political philosophy that is reasonably ambitious will be driven by an ethic, but bound up with an epistemology (“logic of discovery”) and an ontology (understanding of being, or the world). The questions regarding right action in the world—logical procedures for apprehending the world, together with some grasp of the world as it is—are all tightly intertwined.

Values, Facts, and Logic

Given that evaluation, description, and analysis are all caught up in political philosophy, three matching considerations apply. First, political philosophy, with its normative edge, is not independent of facts and logic, but combines the three types of proposition such that priority is accorded to norms. Second, physics and other descriptive studies again combine with evaluation and analysis, priority in this case being accorded to facts. Third, mathematics and similar computational (formal) disciplines recur to the same triad, analysis here forming its apex.

All spheres of understanding are to be presumed fundamentally connected, each new discipline branching from a single tree. The pervasive triadic distinction between norms, logic, and facts may not be read off as promoting empirical, to the exclusion of normative, inquiry. The articulation of this triad no more embodies *in se* a narrow positivism than an expansive idealism—though the triad may be misread either way. Some who embrace the distinction are tempted simply to sever core disciplines one from another. But the distinction enables others to grasp the logic of reciprocal dependence between the three apices.

In the specific case of political philosophy, it is easily shown (as below, in two stages) that any sustainable evaluative construct, without prejudice to the persistence of its normative character, is still welded to empirical and analytical struts.

Stage 1

A. *On the empirical side, “ought” implies “can.”* All normative claims are constrained by empirical presuppositions and conditions. No rule, principle, policy, or recommendation is tenable save on the minimal, but rigid, assumption that its enactment or application is empirically feasible. No rule or principle can be taken as valid in complete abstraction from the factual circumstances to which it relates and in which it is grounded. Political philosophy acquires purchase by reference to the actual conditions it is meant to understand, clarify, adapt, or direct. Philosophical ideals implicate political reality and the two must (in the end) be taken together.

B. *It would be incoherent to commit to any mission that is literally impossible.* A political philosophy is raised, and limited by dependence, upon some underlying ontology—a comprehensive complex of suppositions regarding the actual structure of the world (Being). The ontology may have to do with the fundamental structure of nature, of society, and the cosmos, and may divaricate along lines that are theological, biological, racial, economic, gendered, or other. Consciously formulated or not, the ontology sustains and constrains the normative proposals that are mounted on it. The broad manner in which an agent conceives Being (as a question of fact)

somehow consequentially impacts how that agent commits (morally) to altering or conserving it.

C. A broad image of the world must condition and constrain, without directly dictating, an attendant political philosophy.

Suppose the agent embraces a view—an ontology—of evil as an existential force in the world, whether materially embodied (Satan, Shaitan, Beelzebub, Mephisto), or moral (torture, cruelty), or natural (earthquake, tsunami). Suppose, further, the agent takes the view that human nature is marked by “original sin,” as in the “Christian realism” of Reinhold Niebuhr. This ontology or life-world (*Lebenswelt*; Edmund Husserl’s term) will not necessarily generate a precisely matching moral appeal for military “preparedness.” But it will more readily consort with armed resistance than, say, with promotion of unilateral nuclear disarmament.

Suppose, by contrast, the agent is of opinion that no such thing as a palpable and embodied evil stalks the world; that human nature is fluid and polyvalent; that wrong action results less from malevolence than from misunderstanding and miscalculation; that bad behavior stems more from dysfunctional systems than from ill-willed individuals; and that the actions of agents are reactive and interactive, being rarely (if ever) *sui generis*. Again, this ontology, like the first, will not necessarily lead into some exactly corresponding moral initiative. But it is less likely to consort with a preemptive military posture, and more likely to privilege political philosophies ranging from toleration and negotiation, at one end, to nonviolence and pacifism, at the other (e.g., Socrates; Mohandas K. Gandhi; Martin Luther King, Jr.; the Society of Friends)

D. Although “ought” implies “can,” “can” does not imply “ought”; “is” does not imply “ought.” It is often mistakenly supposed that “reality” directly dictates “morality.” Thus: “One truth is clear, Whatever is, is right” (Pope). Or again: “The real is the rational” (Hegel). However, *is* and *ought* are not identical; nor are *can* and *ought*. Reality is the condition, not the definition, of morality. The relationship is asymmetrical and nonreversible. On the one side, the applicability of any norm is burdened with and constrained by the empirical conditions pertaining to it; so the rightness of enacting the norm partly depends on the background conditions (the

underlying facts) to which it is designed to apply. Nonetheless, even if the background conditions are properly understood, that does not guarantee the rightness of enacting the norm. In sum: a sound ontology is a necessary, not a sufficient, condition for acting on related norms.

Stage 2

A. *On the analytical side, “ought” implies “coherence.”* Any supposedly normative political-philosophical claim, if it contradicts itself, or otherwise flouts basic rules of logic, is inept and inapplicable. A given claim—such as the maxim from George Orwell’s *Animal Farm* that “all animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others”—may sound like gibberish. That is because it is. “Doublethink” derives comedic effect from patent absurdity. A claim that is all incoherence suffices to dismiss itself. No evaluative claim stands where held up by lame logic. That the most distinctive feature of political philosophy is evaluative cannot imply that evaluation is a “lone ranger,” an isolate, a law unto itself. No “ought” is secure, torn from its moorings in logic.

B. *Again, “ought” implies “coherence.”* But “coherence” does not imply “ought.” The relationship between “ought” and “coherence,” like that between “is” and “ought,” is asymmetrical and nonreversible. A coherent train of reasoning does not, first, validate moral claims; and it does not, second, directly validate wider political conclusions. Coherence is a precondition, not a definition, of morality. Take the following syllogism:

1. Severely oppressive systems ought to be overturned.
2. System S is severely repressive.
3. Therefore, S ought to be overturned.

This syllogism, purely as a piece of logic, is indubitably sound. But the soundness of the syllogism does not demonstrate that its first term (i) is ethically or politically right. Nor does the correctness of the conclusion (iii) sanction the possible inference that any particular government, including “A” and “B,” ought to overthrow “S.”

C. In sum, political philosophy is distinctive by virtue of its evaluative edge. Yet it cannot be abstracted from dependence on the analysis and description integral to its success. On the one hand, political philosophy stumbles where any fact on which it depends is false, and it fails where the logic that feeds its conclusions is vicious. On the other hand, while an accurate descriptive foundation is needed to sustain normative claims, that foundation does not certify those claims directly and of itself. What holds for description holds equally for logic: though a coherent logical foundation is necessary to lend support to normative claims, it cannot directly guarantee them. The accuracy of a given chain of reasoning—from major and minor premises through to the conclusion—does not demonstrate the rightness of the major premise. Nor does it demonstrate the rightness of any intervention that an agent may undertake in support of that conclusion.

Evaluative Rationality

Rationality is initially grounded in the questions asked, whatever the answers subsequently elicited. Some questions (“May I have my cake and eat it too?”) are absurd. Some (“How many grains of sand are there under the sea?”) are just difficult—which is not the same as illegitimate or unimportant.

A technical subject that is preponderantly empirical or analytical, like biology, accountancy, or mathematics, is distinguished by its answers. For example, such a question as “What is the square root of x ?” or “How do bats navigate?” is normally expected to draw an answer, if it is correct, that is invariant. A nontechnical subject, however, such as political philosophy, is distinguished more by its questions, than by the invariant quality of its answers.

The questions raised by political philosophy cover an enormous range. On the one hand, some remain perennial. For example: “Is killing permissible?” “Ought the spoils go to the victor?” “Is obedience to law the highest virtue?” On the other hand, novel questions constantly arise. For example: “Should we tolerate the intolerable?” “Ought murderers be subject to capital punishment?” “Should corporations enjoy the rights of biological individuals?” “Is it right to respect the sovereignty of states, where states

abuse the rights of citizens?” Old or new, such questions have sense and reference, even though there is wide agreement that it may not make sense to expect the answers referenced to be entirely uniform.

Humans are fundamentally interdependent. As such, they constitute associations. The human, conceived as a perfect isolate, ceases to be human (as distinct from “a god or a beast,” following Aristotle). Questions as to how members ought to interact (what sorts of order they should construct) are thus unavoidable. Legitimate questions arise as to the proper actions of (1) member to member, (2) member to association, (3) association to member, (4) associations one to another, or (5) associations to environment.

Members (ultimately) have to devise terms of accord; these terms are not genetically imposed, certainly not directly; hence possible terms are always variable; and the consequences of following different paths can matter hugely (some better, some worse). It follows, first, that there is sense in committing to elicit what is better; and, second, that it is advisable to keep an eye open onto such generals (i.e., rules of thumb) or universals (i.e., fixed laws) as may point to, or be reflected in, what is better.

To foreclose *sine die* on inquiry, as by placing beyond the reach of possible counterargument propositions designated as “first principles” (secular procedure) or “articles of faith” (religious procedure), constitutes arbitrary conversion of dialogue into monologue. The legitimacy of questions—in this case about ethics, justice, and policy—extends to the legitimacy of the dialogic process such questions initiate. Stops in and to debate tend to be seen as justified only on practical grounds, not on grounds of principle. Thus, in the dialogic enquiry that constitutes political philosophy, there is no point at which the “buck” of argument stops. It is this that sets political philosophy apart from ideology and dogmatics (the latter specifically theological).

Political philosophy is studded with principles. The question arising is whether these are categorical and universal (idealism, Immanuel Kant) or are consequential and situational (utilitarianism, Jeremy Bentham). One who aspires to a fully coherent order will aspire to a universal code of behavior. One who believes rules must adjust to evolving circumstances will settle for general principles that serve as rules of thumb. Neither

position is irrational. But the first position is more demanding; the second more relaxed.

Whatever is said about the contest between principles, as universal and as situational, there is ample evidence that universal principles at points clash and prove incompatible (e.g., Michael Oakeshott, Alasdair MacIntyre). Rules give little appearance of being parallel lines, stretching to infinity. “Thou shall not kill” cuts across “legitimate self-defense.” Demands for liberty (as by owners of property) jostle against demands for equality (as by the homeless). Justice and punishment contend with opposing calls for forgiveness and tolerance. Neutrality and formality seek to throttle the desire for friendship and intimacy. Aspiration to decisiveness and efficiency contends against the interest in open and unlimited debate. This aporetic tension between political principles has the pull of gravity; against it, rationality engages (like Sisyphus) in unrelenting, up-and-down struggle.

If taken to be universally right without qualification, no principle, rule, or law—at least, none thus far formulated—appears to work altogether satisfactorily. Such principles ordinarily present less as universals, than as generals (rules of thumb)—aptly applying on the whole, but not necessarily in each and every case. Because of the difficulty of determining in what circumstances the rules apply, quite apart from the question regarding what the rules are and should be, marked divergences in broad outlook persist among political philosophers (e.g., consequentialism v. moral absolutism).

Political philosophy, as with any form of rational discourse, makes judgments about real, not phantom, issues, prompted by real and meaningful questions. As these questions differ, together with the circumstances generating them, so do appropriate ways of answering. The proper manner of answering empirical questions cannot be exactly the same as for analytical questions, or these the same as for evaluative questions. Aristotle, in the *Ethics*, notes that education and culture are confirmed in those who “seek in a subject no more precision than its nature allows.”

Culs-de-Sac

It has been argued by philosophers such as Ludwig Wittgenstein, A.J. Ayer, and John L. Austin that the evaluative edge of such a discipline as political philosophy, by virtue of being neither empirical nor analytical, has no objective basis. An empirical claim may be accounted “true” or “false” in virtue of available evidence for or against. An analytical claim may be accounted “correct” or “incorrect,” as a function of initial stipulations together with the consequences derived from these. An evaluative judgment does not technically qualify as either “true,” or as “correct,” but instead as “right” (or “wrong”). Doubts are persistently raised as to the objectivity of judgments of “right” and “wrong.”

Doubts notwithstanding, and despite cycles both of efflorescence and drought, there are no tenable grounds on which political philosophy might plausibly be dismissed. The most trenchant reason for this is that thinkers who believe normative questions are absurd—that they preclude pertinently objective answers—are themselves trapped in absurdity. Any agent, single or collective, caught in the swirl of ongoing activity, is not absolved from choosing (even if only now and again) between significantly opposed options. The actor who believes all action is fated must still consciously choose between “to be and not to be,” between p and not- p , and is compelled, reflectively, to seek reasons for choosing one over the other, even in face of the possibly firm conviction that no genuine choice is possible (or rational). The fact that a given array of options, on a particular occasion, may be equally bad (or good), does not mean that is so on all occasions.

The process of choosing takes form in the agent’s mind as a reflective attempt to distinguish better from worse. Being inescapably engaged, the agent cannot categorically claim, regarding all pressing options and possible acts of choice, that “there is no better or worse.” The logic of significant engagement consists in preference for, and justification of, some options over others. The inescapability of that engagement (for all agents alive and self-conscious) defeats the more remote contention that there is no such process, or that it can be escaped, or that it is merely irrational. Even the option to flip a coin (as at the beginning of a sporting match) may have a perfectly rational basis.

All the same, an agent, single or collective, may still persist in formally embracing the notion that there is no rationality or objectivity underlying moral and political claims—however much contradicted by that agent’s own reflective initiatives. One who takes the view that the evaluative question is immune to rational debate and resolution is primed to commit a category mistake. This consists in transforming evaluative propositions—these being viewed as irrational—into an alternative idiom, either of fact or logic, on the assumption (conscious or not) that factual and logical types of proposition are (by contrast) perfectly objective.

Such transformations, on the factual side, may be illustrated by ethical naturalism. Here, the egoist may contend that all agents are (as a matter of fact) universally self-interested; the egoist then (explicitly or implicitly) “infers,” from the supposed fact of universal self-interestedness, the conclusion that to be self-interested is universally right (Thomas Hobbes, Ayn Rand). Or the utilitarian may affirm that everyone, universally, is in pursuit of happiness (“fact”) and from this “infers” that the pursuit of happiness is morally obligatory. In such moves, psychology (what is) is confounded with ethics (what ought to be), description with prescription.

It matters that the formal distinction between what is and what ought to be is not disguised or elided. First, even if it is true that everyone does x , it does not follow that x is unavoidable, or that x is right. Second, if any given behavior x is uncontrollably driven by biology, and that choice of x is altogether impossible, then any question as to whether x is right—or wrong—is excluded. Third, if x is not uncontrollably driven (or given), two conclusions follow. First, the attribution of factual universality to x is false. Second, this false attribution of universality to x (where x is a human mode of behavior) betrays the purported factual claim as an empirical mask disguising moral commitment. Thus it is that evaluative propositions are commonly transformed into (or passed off as) factual or logical idioms, consciously or otherwise.

Origins and Evolution

Sociopolitical order among humans, in so far as it is not genetically imposed, must be invented (constructivism). The fact that human order is

invented makes it “artificial,” viz., a function of artifice, not nature. Artifice is not *in se* irrational. A Velcro fastener (clasp) is no less artificial than a slide fastener (zipper), but it is in certain respects far better (more efficient). In an early period, all human order, if represented as immutable custom, appears natural. But once custom comes under siege, with standing arrangements shaken to their roots—as especially in war, famine, and economic or other crisis—minds commit more self-consciously to altering rules of engagement. Some seek piecemeal change (gradualism); others promote wholesale change (revolution, utopia); others still desire restoration of the *status quo ante* (conservatism, reaction). Change takes place only against a backdrop of stasis, and stasis is notable only against a backdrop of change; the two are distinct, yet inseparable.

All human order is invented; all, technically, is “artificial.” Traditionalists and conservatives, defending existing or earlier practices, can do so only in a newly self-conscious manner (Edmund Burke). No “ism” is “natural.” At least moderns are aware (though in different degrees) that all “settled” arrangements change. If, over the last 30,000 to 100,000 years, the human species has not been much altered (physiologically), it remains that the human condition, over the same span, has been persistently subject to explosive upheaval, for which political philosophy (religious and secular) has helped to serve as fuse.

The mutation of the human condition is noted in such transitions as those from hunter band to state, muscle to machine, rural to urban, analogue to digital, local to global. The substantive concerns of political philosophy recur in all associations, stateless (horizontal/acephaly) or statist (vertical/hierarchy), if far more in the second than the first. Associations are subject to unrelenting evolution, in response to conditions imposed on humans by nature, and in response to changes imposed on nature by humans. In consequence, political philosophy grows steadily more complex, in regard to (1) internal ordering of communities, (2) order between communities, and (3) ordering of responsibilities by communities towards nature.

A peculiarity of political philosophy is that it is thus far specific to *Homo sapiens sapiens*. Enquiry even into the nature of “human nature”

straightaway becomes itself a philosophical (evaluative) question. Any specific content assigned to human nature implicitly condemns as inept those political philosophies whose implications fly in its face. If, for example, human nature is agreed to be, as a matter of fact, irretrievably selfish, then a political philosophy such as anarchism—in which wholly voluntary cooperation is promoted as the end—must be seen as a nonstarter. If, on the other hand, human nature is seen as essentially altruistic, then a political philosophy of absolutism or despotism will be read off as redundant and thus deplorable.

Whatever is claimed (factually) to constitute human nature has some consequential impact (normatively) on policies that ought to be invoked or on notions regarding how life should be lived. Nonetheless, there can be no direct inference from (a) some factual characterization of what human nature is to (b) some moral conclusion as to proper policy or behavior. But there is a negative, exclusionary logic, such that the stipulation of (a) disallows any (b) that runs contrary to (a). In sum, if the fact of human nature is irretrievably x , any governing norm that presupposes not- x must fail.

Humans, however intelligent, are nonetheless animals. Some part of the brain, and consequently thinking, remains grounded in the animal genome. The question cannot be: “Does the genetic connection exist?” The question is: “How and in what degree does it hold?” And that question is more easily asked than answered. Suffice it to say that sociopolitical order among humans, though mostly invented, is not plausibly conceived as perfectly free-floating, the outturn of an uncompromisingly autonomous intellect.

In the same way that it is unwise to assume that construction of human order is an entirely independent, rational process, so is it imprudent to suppose that no other species possess the potential, in whatever degree, for rationality. There is consciousness and self-consciousness among Pongidae (gorillas, chimps, orangutans), Cetacea (whales, dolphins, porpoises), and some Aves (bird) species. Self-consciousness is a precondition for rationality, and rationality—via language—is a precondition for normative order. Any creatures, like dolphins and chimps, in whom there exists some

non-instinctive capacity to communicate, betray likewise an element of actual or prospective rationality (Peter Singer).

Whatever may be said of other species, humans amply demonstrate this rational potential, no matter its limitations. Unlike the Capricorn beetle, honeybee, or bonito, humans are bereft of biological programming sufficiently powerful to directly impose any universally consistent socio-political order. Being markedly interdependent, yet deprived of any very tight, genetically imposed ordering, humans are compelled to fall back either upon violence (force) or suasion (dialogue) to fill the gap. Persuasion abuts upon sustained reflection—communicative rationality. Although political philosophers entertain rival views as to how genuinely autonomous human thinking is, most (today) assume that the customs, rules, laws, policies, and principles governing the human family (in its various demographics) are less the gift of nature, than of ratiocinative artifice.

Over three thousand years, a thin thread that has run through political philosophy is a quest for principles that yield, not just systems of order, but systems justly ordered. At one extreme, (1) the mix of answers reflects an ideal of resignation and submission (the Pentateuch, the Book of Job, the Qur'an, Thomas Aquinas). In between, (2) there is the call for retention of existing or customary practices (traditionalism, conservatism). There lies at the other extreme, (3) an ideal of basic rights, citizen participation, and active, corporate self-interest (see, e.g., Thomas Paine, John Stuart Mill, John Dewey, John Rawls).

The first orientation (resignation) underscores the notion of being ordered through violence or superior force, as by a tyrant, dictator, monarch, god, or god's representatives on earth. The middle orientation (traditionalism) fixes upon retaining whatever order there happens to be, or returning to any that appears to have worked in the past. The third orientation (citizen participation) commits to a polity self-ordered via discursive rationality or "communicative action" (Jürgen Habermas). This rationality may be conferred upon the association as a whole ("mobocracy," direct democracy), or be confined to some more compact body within it (republican government, representative democracy).

The positions advanced from these three perspectives can all be combined in various ways. But this broad band of possible appeals to order—object v. subject, stability v. instability, passive v. active—must be read off more as principles than as autonomic or psychological “drives” or “instincts.” The various political, philosophical, religious, ethical, and ideological orders displayed in human associations (code-switching, mimesis) would be confined to a much narrower spectrum were they merely “natural,” viz. directly imposed by nature.

Reference and Homologues

Political philosophy attends to right conduct towards the individual, society, state, global community, and environment. Human populations grow and spread, the natural environment tacks and turns, socio-political organization transitions and mutates. Correspondingly, political philosophy evolves in ways ever more complex—permeating university departments under numerous appellations. Social theory is addressed in sociology, legal and jurisprudential theory in law, leadership theory in business studies and administration, applied ethics in philosophy, public policy in political science (political studies) and economics, and so on. The hard core of the subject (sense) persists, the conditions to which it applies (reference) spatter like raindrops in a storm.

Confining attention to the academic study of political science or political studies, political philosophy, in its core aspects—normative, factual (historical and ontological), and analytical—is imperfectly shadowed by the terms (1) *political theory*, (2) *political thought*, and (3) *political ideology*.

1. Political Theory

a. *Political theory* may refer to an analytical approach. This analytic turn is variably styled “political philosophy” (Anthony Quinton, William Kymlicka, David Raphael), “conceptual analysis” or “political concepts” (Felix Oppenheim), “political argument” (Brian Barry) or “political analysis” (Robert Dahl). It tends to concentrate upon such ideas as liberty (Jean-Paul Sartre, Isaiah Berlin, Joseph Raz, Orlando Patterson), equality

(Charles Beitz, Amy Gutmann, Albert Weale), justice (Michael Sandel, Ronald Dworkin, Michael Walzer), toleration (Preston King, Susan Mendus, John Horton), power and authority (Steven Lukes, Nico Poulantzas, Peter Morriss, David Beetham, Barry Hindess, E.D. Watt), revolution (Hannah Arendt, Krishan Kumar, Chalmers Johnson), political obligation (James Fishkin, Richard Flathman, Carole Pateman), punishment (Michel Foucault, Patrick Devlin, Ted Honderich, Matt Matravers), federalism, sovereignty, the common good, influence, welfarism, hegemony, and so on.

b. Political theory, in this analytic iteration (1a), reflects two distinct approaches, though the two are rarely if ever entirely disconnected. The first is syntactic and attends to initial meanings conferred upon ideas, together with subsequent conclusions that may or may not be inferred from them (syntax, grammar). This syntactic approach explores the logic of ideas, but is not directly or immediately concerned to promote the values that may be associated with them. Nor is it necessarily an expression of moral subjectivism, relativism, or intuitionism. Examples of this approach are Stanley Benn and Richard Peters on the democratic state, Morriss on power, and King on toleration.

c. The second approach reflected in this analytic iteration (1a) is semantic. It attends to ideas or concepts more directly in light of their presumed bearing upon the world. The semantic approach (like the syntactic) is primarily committed to exploring the logic of ideas, but with more immediate regard to endorsing or opposing the values instantiated. Examples of this approach are such as Sartre and Berlin on liberty, Rawls on justice, Honderich on punishment, and Glenn Tinder on tolerance.

d. Still confining attention to the broad analytic version of political theory (1a), but now also to its political science context, the range of ideas characteristically explored here tend to engage more with state order, than with the social order—the latter being that site whence states arise, and in which they are grounded. In parallel, the political theory of political science tends to give only limited attention to norms of interstate order and to its associated “cosmopolitanism” (Kenneth W. Appiah, Charles Beitz, Daren O’Byrne, Chris Brown, Nigel Dower).

e. Political theory, in yet a third turn (in addition to 1b and 1c), may be conceived as the theoretical engine of political science. So understood, it too may present in two distinct forms, the first seeking to construct *laws*, the second (more modestly) *models*, of political behavior. The focus upon laws conveys a comprehensive scientific (empirical) concern with how political agents act, not with how they ought to act, in order to predict behavior (perhaps electoral) in some general or universal way—hence behaviorism (Charles Merriam, Harold Lasswell, David Easton). Though this Newtonian variety of political theory still enjoys some purchase, the model of science that it affirms has largely been overtaken by subsequent developments in the philosophy of science (Karl Popper, Thomas Kuhn, Imre Lakatos).

f. “Scientific” or law-like political theory (as in 1e) is increasingly likely to place a clamp on its ambitions, and to resort now more to models that

1. feature assumptions regarding the ends actually or hypothetically pursued by actors,
2. factor in conditions or identities that constrain those actors, and
3. infer conclusions from (i) and (ii) as to the strategies actors will, may, or “ought” to take (Anthony Downs, Kenneth Arrow, Russell Hardin, Keith Dowding).

In this way, political theory can aim to model decisions taken by individuals or associations, with a view either to predicting or recommending tactics, strategies, or policies.

g. The general advantage of flexible and situation-specific modeling over the rigidity of Newtonlike law-making is that the former more readily accommodates the feedback loop appropriate to rational and self-referential agency. Hence the rise of risk analysis, decision theory, game theory, and rational-choice theory, fruitfully informing methodology in political science, economics, and in social science generally. (Jon Elster, Michael Taylor, Cristina Bicchieri).

h. “Scientific” political theory (1e), launched to construct a universally predictive political science (Merriam, Lasswell), was largely designed to displace political philosophy. Thus understood, it was more an expression

of scientism than of science. By contrast, a political theory roughly constructed along game theoretic terms (1f and 1g) would have no such capacity or aim, though some arguments, like Downs's economic theory of democracy or Arrow's impossibility theorem, can be read off in an anti-normative vein.

i. Models and modeling constitute a marked improvement over the Newtonian approach of "scientific" or "behavioral" political theory. Nonetheless, in modeling, the weakest (most ambiguous) link in the chain of argumentation is the first. While models are methodologically fruitful, they may also slip into positivism by allowing the initial conditions (1f.i) to be treated more as mere matter of fact than as ethical act. In rational-choice theory, for example, the principle—viz. commitment to maximizing self-interest—may be stripped of its normative edge and thus thrown back upon (converted into) mere descriptive psychology.

j. The "moral" principle of egoism and maximization of self-interest ultimately derives from Hobbes (17th century) and Bentham (19th century) and is on the whole uncritically absorbed from them into modern economic theory either as a matter of fact or as a fundamental operating assumption. The rational-choice position is *in esse* formulated in hypothetical-conditional terms ("if x, then y"). Nonetheless, any norm converted into fact (even if "on condition") may well operate with the force of a "hidden persuader." To accept that some specific behavior is universal (like reflexive withdrawal of hand from fire) is to accept that this behavior is not subject to choice and thus renders irrelevant questions of moral agency. Care must be taken to avoid even the subliminal impression that the model can properly serve as a substitute for evaluative thinking, especially with respect to assumptions about motivations as described in 1f.iii.

k. As well as signaling logical analysis (sentactic or semantic) and scientific analysis (formulating laws or generating models), the term *political theory* (William Connolly) is often used also to signify the history of ideas, referencing the same historical content as *political thought*.

2. Political Thought

a. “Political thought” tends to signal historical enquiry, and as such is a subset of “the history of ideas” (R.N. Berki, John Morrow, George Sabine). It explores in temporal order either

1. a canon of writers or
2. a canonic set of themes as instantiated by writers.

If the concern is with (i), the level of reflection will vary as between the more methodical and systematic (Spinoza, Hegel, Rawls), the more episodic (Machiavelli, Montaigne, Madison), and the more prolix (Montesquieu, Marx, Dewey). If the concern is with (ii), then themes predominate as illustrated by key writers, again taken in chronological order. Most such “political thought,” whether (i) or (ii), attends to European and American thinkers, but is increasingly extended to other regions (Africa, America, Asia) and countries (China, India, Russia) and categories (gender, labor, race).

b. The history of ideas (and thus of political thought) figures prominently in political studies, as it does in the study of literature, art, music, architecture, archeology, and biology (evolution). Where a subject is more technical, like economics, in the sense of admitting more stereotypical answers, or aspiring to these, its history is constantly updated in the sense of being displaced. Where, by contrast, a subject is constituted by important questions, without correspondingly straightforward answers, those who seek a deeper understanding are propelled into its devious, historic back-channels. At the point where economic theory turns, and begins to question its technocratic competence, it morphs into political philosophy, as, for example, in F. A. von Hayek, Milton Friedman, and Amartya Sen (David Miller).

c. The question as to how the history of political thought may be best executed is subject to some dispute.

1. It is widely argued or supposed that old and even ancient texts have much to teach us, on the understanding that important ideas, whenever formulated, have a value that is somehow perennial (Howard Warrender on Hobbes, Simone Goyard-Fabre on Montesquieu, Hiram Caton on Descartes).

2. By contrast, some argue that there are no perennial questions, that earlier texts only address problems current when written, and that what these texts mean can only be unearthed via recovery of their historical context (Quentin Skinner, John Pocock, Richard Ashcraft). The first approach is fairly unselfconscious, the second is not, though both occasion discomfort. What both confirm, however, is the indispensability of earlier writers (historical texts) to all current and ongoing excogitation.

3. Political Ideology

1. “Political ideology” has an emphatically historical character—a variation on “political thought” or “the history of political thought”—because it attends to diverse *traditions* of political thinking, reconfiguring the history of ideas under banner headlines like conservatism, socialism, liberalism, fascism, environmentalism, feminism, republicanism, etc. This approach is characteristic of broad social movements and of political parties that entertain a program of action, backed by reasons, the latter equipped with a history—of intellectual development from past to present.
2. Political philosophy and political ideology share the same basic ingredients (value, fact, analysis), and the same distinctive concern with norms. More precisely, political ideology comes closest to political philosophy in the latter’s normative, theoretical, analytic, and semantic form (see 1c above). Yet the two diverge.
3. The object of political philosophy is to serve as a normative guide, but subject to proper understanding; its premises are engaged more as hypothesis than dogma; thus these premises, through tinkering, may change; and, given “axioms” subject to critical review, foundations are more likely marked by gradual change, not sudden, violent overthrow.
4. The immediate thrust of political ideology is also normative, but marked by a more imperative commitment to mobilize and to act; here initial premises are received as dogma; dogma fortifies axioms against critical review; and foundations that cannot be amended, likely conclude upended.
5. Both political philosophy and political ideology may be unavoidable, and even perhaps necessary; they differ nonetheless. Where the focus

is more purely upon understanding, every claim is more provisional, open to debate: there are no full-stops. Where the focus is more exclusively upon mobilization, only technical claims are provisional, the normative referent is fixed—hence axiom, scientism, creed, mission, dogma, faith. Thus the procedure of political ideology is severely axiomatic, deductive, reductive, sometimes revelatory. Religious movements (distinctively concerned with divinity or afterlife) are but a subset of ideological movements, cut adrift from situational logic, moored to immovable premises, freed from any burden of self- or cross-examination.

6. University departments often mimic the ideological approach, understood as the recuperation of diverse traditions (3a), and may devise from it a type (or types) of course, mostly inspired by one of two motives. The first is to supply a more popular and accessible alternative to “the history of political thought.” The second is to enable a more clinical dissection of the questionable *modus operandi* implicated in converting the history of political thought into its ideological alternative. And the two may blend.
7. Academic political ideology, as at (3f), raises two types of concern. First, there is the question of the degree of reliability that may attach to claims regarding the influence of any past writer, W, upon successors. Second, conversely, there is the question of the soundness of any claim laid by movement or party, P, to the intellectual legacy of some long-deceased W, who might well, if alive, repudiate the imputed tie. In this vein, it can be radically misleading to recruit Plato as a current communitarian or socialist, Machiavelli as an elitist, Hobbes as an individualist, Locke as a liberal, Rousseau as a democrat (and a green), Smith as a “free-market” celebrant, Marx as a Soviet-style, command-economy communist, or Hegel and Nietzsche as proponents of fascism and Nazism. Such insensibility provokes the just animus of historians of ideas, among them methodological contextualists (2.C.ii).

Preston King

See also [Human Nature, Theories of](#); [Methodology of Political Thought](#); [Political Science and Political Thought](#)

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Hubertus Buchstein Dirk Jörke Hubertus Buchstein and Dirk Jörke

Political Science and Political Thought

Political science and political thought

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Political Science and Political Thought

The relationship between political science and political thought is shaped by misunderstandings. Many political scientists since the behavioral revolution of the 1950s and 1960s have questioned whether political thought should be understood as a scientific endeavor at all. According to their critical view, political thought has no intersubjectively verifiable methods, tends to blur the fact/value distinction, and is not concerned about phenomena and causal mechanisms in the real political world. As behavioral and empirically oriented research became hegemonic in political science in the United States and in most other countries of the Western world, the subdiscipline of political thought became marginalized in political science and found its home in departments of philosophy, history, and other humanities.

Scholars who specialize in the field of political thought have continued to complain again that they are not getting the attention and the resources (e.g., for jobs or books) they deserve. Furthermore, as noted by Timothy Kaufman-Osborne (2010) and Gregory Kasza (2010), the number of required courses in political thought has sharply declined at a rising number of colleges and universities. Political theorists are more and more concerned about the status of political thought in political science. This marginalization of political thought, however, is at least in some parts a consequence of the reluctance of political theorists to interact with the empirically oriented subfields of the discipline in a more productive and enriching way.

Evolution of Political Science

Introductory books in political science often claim that Aristotle is the founder of the discipline, citing as an example his comparison in his *Politics* of different regimes or his inquiry into the causes of regime change. One may even go further back to argue that Thucydides founded empirical research in politics in his *History of the Peloponnesian War*. As both authors are also famous for their political thought, at the very beginning of political research, there was no separation between empirical political science and political thought. This is true also for a long period in the history of political ideas; famous examples are Niccolò Machiavelli and Alexis de Tocqueville. Even in the works of such a highly abstract thinker as Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, one can find empirical observations, such as those about the economic sphere or the family. Even at the very beginning of the development of political science as an autonomous discipline in the second half of the nineteenth century, empirical research went hand in hand with political thought in the sense of normative reflections or considerations about the very nature of the political and empirical research.

That fruitful relationship changed during the twentieth century. The professionalization of the discipline has increased the demand for empirical research and findings. Theory in political science was understood as either analytical or based on observation of facts. Following a rather superficial reading of Max Weber, many scholars have been especially critical of attempts to justify normative claims in political thought. They have also opposed political thought that has obvious political roots, as in the work of Carl Schmitt, in Marxism or in John Dewey's pragmatism. The new generation of political scientists instead have favored a style of research that is seemingly neutral with regard to the "great questions"—for example, those about justice, the best regime, or the relationship between the individual and the state—that have been and still are the main topic of political thought.

Political Thought and the Behavioral Revolution

One of the sharpest criticisms of normative political thought is found in *Political Theory* (1959) by Arnold Brecht, a book that became one of the core texts of the behavioral revolution. Brecht denies any scientific worth of political thought. All theoretical utterances have to be either observation sentences, observation sentences deduced from hypothesis statements, or at most, hypotheses with a wider range that have been deduced from observation sentences. Consequently, on this understanding of political science, there is no need for political thought; what is needed is merely a political science that in generalizing observational sentences is already theoretical driven. Every claim that goes beyond such scientific research, according to Brecht and other forerunners of the behavioral movement, is simply “unscientific.” Of course, some political scientists such as David Easton and Robert Dahl joined the behavioral camp but have been much more open to a political thought with some empirical roots. Nevertheless, the mainstream of political scientists, at least in the Anglo-American world, has insisted on a strong separation between sober, scientific (that is, empirical) research, on the one hand, and a more speculative kind of political thought, on the other.

Critiques of Positivist Approaches in Political science

Eric Voegelin

The challenging counterattacks of Eric Voegelin and Sheldon Wolin against this understanding of political science had no strong impact on the hegemony of empirical approaches in political science. In his seminal book *The New Science of Politics* (1952), Voegelin argued that the contemporary practice of political science had been much too narrow and would merely duplicate political reality rather than produce true knowledge. According to Voegelin, political science as a narrowly conceived empirical discipline would not be able to address the troubling challenges of the modern world, such as Nazism, Marxism, and Western consumerism. To counter these challenges, Voegelin pleaded for an understanding of political science that is able to answer the “great questions” of human beings again; goes back to

the political philosophy of Plato, Aristoteles, and Thomas Aquinas; and therefore includes not only ethics but also political anthropology and even ontologies. In this conception of political science, empirical research, if it has any sense at all, has lost any autonomy and it is political philosophy that resides in the center of the discipline. Thus, one can see in *The New Science of Politics* some kind of mirror image of the behavioral hegemony.

Sheldon Wolin

Against the background of the highly politicized political culture of the late 1960s, Sheldon Wolin, in *Political Theory as a Vocation* (1969), opposed the seemingly neutral character of political science. Following Thomas Kuhn, he argued that the methods dominant in contemporary political research are just another scientific fashion that must be supplemented by a more historical understanding of politics and of science. The main point of his criticism, however, was to reproach political scientists for a failure to be politically engaged. Against the reduced understanding of politics and ethics of the “methodist,” he argued for the vision and engagement of the political theorists. Although Wolin’s arguments did not change the outlook of the discipline in general, they became influential stepping stones to a revival of political thought. Together with the rebirth of political philosophy in the wake of John Rawls’s *A Theory of Justice*, Wolin’s critique has led to a growing interest and even importance of political thought in the last decades of the twentieth century.

Responses to Work in Political Theory

Gunnell (1983) has described some of the reasons why the more empirically oriented political scientists have failed to recognize the contributions of political theorists to the discipline. Most scholars who specialized in political thought were not very concerned with real political problems. Their theories were often formulated so abstractly that it was difficult to identify an agenda for empirical research or even to formulate hypotheses to guide the empirical work. Think, for example, about the discussions on the proper reading of John Rawls’s *Theory of Justice*, which dominated the debates in political philosophy in the 1970s and 1980s. A related problem

was the import of discussions and intellectual fashions from philosophy of sciences, analytical philosophy, metaethics, linguistics, structuralism, and existentialism. It has often seemed that the contributions in political theory only mirrored these larger trends and were not translated into the language and the research interests of political science. Another cause for the isolation of political thought can be seen in the rise of the Cambridge School, which holds that the texts of the past must be interpreted only in their own linguistic context and are used as inspirations for current affairs. Last but not least, scholars in political thought were still producing countless books and articles about the “great thinkers” of the past such as Plato, Machiavelli, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Immanuel Kant, and Alexis de Tocqueville, who were either repeating the insights of earlier studies or focusing on very detailed problems. As a result, work in political theory often had no impact on the interpretation of current problems in political science. At least, this has been the charge of many political scientists, a charge that might have been justified with regard to many, but certainly not all, contributions of political thought.

Political Science in the Twenty-First Century

One of the main reasons for the behavioral revolution and the decline of political thought after World War II was the belief that the great “normative issues had been settled” (Gunnell 1993, 219). The values and institutions of liberal democracy were considered to be the only legitimate ones, especially in comparison with those of the totalitarian regimes, and there was no need for any further political thought. Political thinkers from the left and from the right were still criticizing the liberal mainstream in political science, and there also had been some conceptual innovations within the concept of liberal democracy as the theory of deliberative democracy or multiculturalism; nevertheless, most political scientists simply ignored these contributions or integrated them in their framework without changing it very much.

Some scholars argue that the longstanding hegemony of liberal democracy is coming to an end. Their claim is threefold. First, there is the emerging importance of transnational and supranational decision-making bodies like the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, and the

European Union, which have weakened nation-states and therefore the power of representative institutions like parliaments or political parties. Second, the Fordist regime that integrated great parts of the population in the Western democracies during the second half of the twentieth century has been seriously eroded. The result of this development may be a rebirth of political conflicts beyond the calm waters of representative democracy. Considering the recent wave of populism in Europe and the United States, one can get at least an impression of what the future even in relatively stable regimes could look like. Third, the growing importance of non-Western countries like China, India, or Brazil in world politics not only challenges the world power system but also raises new normative questions, as, for example, with respect to the question of intellectual property or the human rights framework. This development and some other larger trends challenge the conceptual and normative framework of political science today. Obviously, there is a growing need for new theoretical concepts and ideas. Political science should no longer be glued to traditional narratives about liberal democracy.

These changes have led some political scientists to rethink their attitudes toward the subdiscipline of political thought. In recent years, political theorists have published a growing number of contributions that reconstruct political concepts of the past in different ways and make them compatible with a political reform agenda. Examples include mixed forms of government (also known as mixed constitutions), the introduction of lotteries as a substitute for some forms of elected officials, and the tribunate (or body of directly elected officials), as discussed by H. Buchstein and M. Hein (2010) and J. P. McCormick (2011). Such developments indicate that to cut the bonds between political science and with political thought would give away one of the richest resources of their discipline.

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See also [American Political Thought](#); [Methodology of Political Thought](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Strauss, Leo](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [Voegelin, Eric](#)

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Peter Beilharz Peter Beilharz

Political Sociology

Political sociology

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Political Sociology

Political sociology works across the fields of politics and society. More broadly, it connects themes across power, class and elite, state and society, and social movements. It draws attention to the institutions that mediate between them and organize interests. Political sociology has become more diffuse over the last 30 years, as its own interests have shifted beyond the state and into civil society. If politics is almost everywhere, then so will political sociology be.

The tradition of political sociology can be simplified into three phases and animating concerns. In the first phase, opening in the nineteenth century, political sociology was dominated by the new phenomenon of the mass political party. In the second, coming into fruition with the Golden Age of capitalism in the 1960s, state and democracy were major themes. In the third, from the 1980s on, the new wave of globalization and neoliberal regulation saw a shift of emphasis onto new social movements and networks.

The mass political party form was pioneered by the German Social Democrats, followed by parties such as the Australian Labor Party. Early leading critics included Robert Michels and Werner Sombart, both working in different ways under the influence of Max Weber, whose ghost shadows the tradition of political sociology, as he pioneered the critique of domination and power. Michels coined the famous iron law of oligarchy, which says that in any organization, rule by an elite is inevitable. The labor

movement pursues its interests into the political arena, but the organization overpowers the ends of the movement. As Gordon Childe said of the Australian case, its victory is pyrrhic, Labor's gain, entering the state, is the loss of socialism as a goal. Michels, Vilfredo Pareto, and Gaetano Mosca viewed this as part of the process of the endless repetition of the circulation of elites. Others, like Antonio Gramsci, believed that workers could make a new proletarian order, later a new counter-hegemony. Popular struggles led to increased interest in populism.

Depression and war led to Keynesianism, the postwar economic boom, and the consolidation of the welfare state. Some, like Robert Dahl, sought to find in the postwar regime proof not of endless elites but of serious local pluralism, or the dispersion of power. Others like C. Wright Mills focused critical attention on new power elites or classes at all levels. By the 1960s, the revival of Marxism and critical theory drew new attention to the state's role in reproduction (Louis Althusser; Pierre Bourdieu) and to fiscal and legitimation crises of the state (James O'Connor, Jürgen Habermas). The issue of whether the state was essentially or circumstantially capitalist was debated by Ralph Miliband and Nicos Poulantzas. The central motif of crisis into the 1970s led to work on the state defined primarily as a crisis manager. From Sweden to Australia, new debate opened on the question of whether these developments could be usefully connected to the earlier corporatist tradition.

The new wave of globalization that made its impact felt into the 1980s shifted emphasis away from the state as traditionally defined, as that state was invariably a nation-state, and new forms of governance often were proposed to take on a larger global or regional frame. The new wave of globalization served as political license for Western states to step back from social democratic forms of regulation, although this in turn necessitated new forms of regulation. As Karl Polanyi had argued in the 1940s, markets were created by states as much as states by markets. But now the focus shifted often onto new social movements and new social media, as forms of popular struggle adopted the technology of their opponents. In this context, network analysis took on a new life in the work of Manuel Castells, who developed a theory of a "network society" made up of cultural, political, and economic elements interacting in information and communication

networks. Zygmunt Bauman argued that individuals remain trapped in the bounds of earlier, perhaps dying, institutional patterns. The dreams of democracy that were incubated in the 1960s collapsed in the 1980s, reemerging as hopes for civil society and citizenship that in turn evaporated. At the end of the story, as at its beginning, we are left with the heavy shadow of Max Weber's ghost, that of the iron cage of institutions built to make us free, which now, still, seem to entrap us. And yet, it moves.

Peter Beilharz

See also [Althusser, Louis](#); [Citizenship](#); [Civil Society](#); [Class](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Globalization](#); [Gramsci, Antonio](#); [Habermas, Jürgen](#); [Keynes, John Maynard](#); [Mass Society](#); [Michels, Robert](#); [Mosca, Gaetano](#); [Neoconservatism](#); [Neoliberalism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Pareto, Vilfredo](#); [Political Culture](#); [Political Science and Political Thought](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [Weber, Max](#)

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Stefano Gattei Stefano Gattei

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Popper, Karl

Karl Raimund Popper was born in Vienna on July 28, 1902. In 1919, he joined the Association of Socialist School Students but left it for good shortly thereafter. In the same year he discovered Alfred Adler's "individual psychology" and Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis, as well as attended a lecture of Albert Einstein's in Vienna. In 1928, he successfully submitted his doctoral dissertation (*Zur Methodenfrage der Denkpsychologie*) where he discussed and compared the positions of Karl Bühler and Moritz Schlick; the following year he qualified to teach mathematics and physics in secondary schools. From 1930 to 1933, he completed the draft of *The Two Fundamental Problems of the Theory of Knowledge*, which would be published only in 1979. In late 1934, he published *Logik der Forschung* that is printed with date 1935 (a revised and enlarged English translation appeared in 1959). Forced out by the political situation in Austria, in 1937, Popper accepted a post at University College in New Zealand. In 1943, he completed *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, which was published two years later in England. Part of his "war effort," as he called it, was also a series of papers in the journal *Economica*; a revised version of these articles appeared in 1957 in book form, under the title of *The Poverty of Historicism*. At the end of War World II, Austrian economist Friedrich F. von Hayek offered him a readership at the London School of Economics and Political Science. In 1949, he was appointed professor of logic and scientific method at the University of London; he became emeritus in 1969. In 1958, he was elected fellow of the British Academy; in 1965, he was

knighted by the Queen; and in 1976, he became a member of the Royal Society. He died in Croydon, near London, on September 17, 1994.

Thought

One of the most significant thinkers of the twentieth century, Popper centered his whole philosophy around the intrinsically fallible character of our knowledge. His philosophy provides a middle way between two, opposed authoritarian approaches to science and society: dogmatism and relativism. It offers an account of how scientific knowledge can be objective and rational without being certain, and without appealing to induction or grounding itself upon expert opinion, consensus, and authority of any kind. The core feature of his philosophy, in science and rationality as well as in politics and society, is that knowledge is not a form of justified belief. Critical rationalism—as Popper labeled his own philosophy, characterizing it by the appeal to reason and the role of criticism—draws attention to the relevance of attempts, as to the way in which knowledge grows, and of criticism, as to the way in which it is put to test. Growth of knowledge and criticism are closely interconnected: According to Popper, we should prefer that the theoretical system that, at any given state of critical discussion, accomplishes a growth of the possibly corroborated (that is, which has survived sincere attempts of refutation) empirical content.

Criticism, freedom, and rationality also constitute the core of Popper's view of politics and the open society. From the rejection of any form of justificationism, it follows that our actions may have unintended consequences, and this is particularly true when we seek large-scale political changes. As a consequence, we should not run the risk of making irrevocable and uncontrollable mistakes. Popper prescribed a view of science *in itinere*, for it is easy to get rid of its products (of new and imaginative theories, that is) if they prove to be wrong. Along the same line, he prescribed a piecemeal reformist activity for society: for the consequences of our actions, which are already difficult to foresee, are nearly always impossible to control. Society and politics do not primarily derive their choices or means from science but do use the scientific method. Scientific rationality and democratic government are one and the same thing: For despite its defects, only democracy provides an institutional

structure that allows for the use of reason in the political arena; democracy, that is, allows for the change of government without bloodshed.

Popper's political outlook is intimately connected to his anti-justificationism, as it emerged from the intense years that culminated in *Logik der Forschung*. Both *The Poverty of Historicism* and *The Open Society and Its Enemies* grew out of the theory of knowledge developed in *Logik der Forschung*, as well as of Popper's belief that our (mostly unconscious) opinions about the theory of knowledge and its central problems are decisive for our very attitude toward society and politics. In his eyes, the rationalist attitude—the attitude of reasonableness, that is—is very similar to the scientific attitude, to the belief that in the search for truth we need cooperation, and that, with the help of argument, we can in time attain something like objectivity.

Stefano Gattei

See also [Democratic Theory](#); [Freud and Social Theory](#); [Methodology of Political Thought](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Positivism](#); [Totalitarianism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Populism

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Populism

In everyday use, the term *populist* variously connotes simplicity rather than complexity, crudeness rather than refinement, mass rather than elite appeal, and a preference for intuition and instinct over reason and deliberation. Scholarly analyses of parties and social movements regarded as populist have not always escaped the influence of these normative evaluations, leading to persistent doubts about the value of the concept for dispassionate research. Indeed, although the term *populism* has been applied to a variety of political parties and movements since the mid-nineteenth century, only in the 1960s did it begin to receive sustained attention as a political concept.

Initially, theorists sought to conceptualize populism in terms of a set of concrete political demands emanating from a distinct social base. Yet definitions based on a wide selection of cases were prone to contradictoriness, while definitions derived from a restricted set of cases were difficult to apply in comparative research. Mid-twentieth-century Latin American movements were regarded as populist because of their “irresponsible” statist economic policy and celebration of traditional values in contexts of rapid urbanization. Yet this definition could not encompass the agrarian populism of the nineteenth-century American Midwest, nor account for why Latin American neoliberals of the 1980s also attracted the epithet. In response to these difficulties, M. Canovan (1982, 12–13) constructed a typology of populisms on the basis of their various manifestations to date, distinguishing farmers’ radicalism, peasant movements, intellectual agrarian socialism, populist dictatorship, populist

democracy, reactionary populism, and politicians' populism. However, this typology—and subsequent attempts to refine or replace it—suffered from the absence of an underlying conceptualization of populism itself.

More recent definitions have sought to avoid the problems of content-based approaches by couching populism in broader and more abstract terms rather than attempting to locate its essence in policy. According to Laclau (2005, 47), populism consists in a “logic of equivalence” by which distinct and hitherto isolated popular discontents accumulate to form broad, diffuse challenges to the hegemony of the elite. This theory draws due attention to the fact that challenges to the political status quo can potentially emerge from anywhere in the social structure and represent diverse interests, thus, being broadly popular rather than class-based. However, the majority of contemporary approaches eschew its structuralist implications. Instead, they explain populism in terms of the agency of political entrepreneurs, focusing on the rhetorical construction of the antagonistic relationship between the people and the elite.

Theorists of populism as a “thin” or “thin-centered” ideology argue that all its instances demonstrate the same distinct pattern of ontological and normative claims: Populists identify the friend-enemy distinction between “the people” and “the elite” as an intrinsic characteristic of politics, and they argue that the interests of the people are more authentic and have greater legitimacy; therefore, populists justify this stance with reference to the moral superiority of the good, virtuous people over the evil, corrupt elite. Populism is thus an ideology rooted in the foundational myth of modern representative politics: the notion that “we, the People, are somehow the source of political authority” (Canovan 2005, 128). Like that of nationalism, the ideology of populism is thin in the sense that alone it does not imply a set of specific policies; instead it must combine with “thicker,” more conceptually complex ideologies to provide answers to important political questions.

The thin-ideological approach identifies the specifically *populist* features of a party's political appeal while accounting for the diversity of populism's manifestations. However, some scholars dispute the value of conceptualizing populism as an ideology, observing that populists rarely

pursue the objective of conferring greater decision-making power on the people. Rather, populism is the means by which political actors, as self-styled tribunes of the people, assert their special legitimacy to govern. It is a distinct political strategy employed to court mass appeal, involving a self-consciously folksy style of communication in which politicians employ demotic language and unpolished modes of behavior and dress, the aim being to persuade the people to vote for “one of their own.”

These actions often accompany the invocation of a “heartland”: a conception of utopian return to “a life that has already been lived” and found to be more authentic than the present (Taggart 2004, 274). The nationalist and conservative connotations of the heartland help to explain populism’s particular appeal in recent years as a strategy for parties of the radical right, including the “Tea Party” movement that came to the fore in the United States in 2010. As one populism can evoke a contrary one, the conservative Tea Party was joined, in 2011, by the leftist U.S. “Occupy” movement, which soon spread overseas to Europe and beyond. Both have claimed to represent “the people” against the elites.

Ben Stanley

See also [American Political Thought](#); [Civil Society](#); [Conservatism](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Ideology](#); [Latin American Political Thought](#); [Nationalism](#); [Republicanism](#)

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Mike Hawkins Mike Hawkins

Positivism

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Positivism

Positivism is a philosophy that argues that only the scientific method can yield reliable knowledge, and that this method should be applied to social phenomena as well as to the natural world. This perspective was developed during the 1920s and 1930s in the form of *logical positivism*, which maintained that apart from mathematics and logic, sensory perception was the only source of knowledge, and all concepts must either be derived from observation, or capable of being translatable into statements based on observation. However, positivism is most closely associated with the nineteenth-century French theorists Henri de Saint-Simon and Auguste Comte, and their followers. In their writings, a theory of knowledge and science was integrated with a philosophy of history and a program of political and moral reconstruction.

This form of positivism received its most systematic and influential formulation from Comte (1798–1857). In his *Course of Positive Philosophy* (1830–42), Comte argued that knowledge evolves through three states. In the first “theological” state, phenomena and events are explained by the agency of supernatural forces and entities. In the second, “metaphysical” state, supernatural agencies are replaced by the action of abstract forces residing in matter. In the final, “positive” state, causal explanations are replaced by the search for laws governing the relations among observable phenomena. In the first two states, reason is dominated by imagination; in the third, the situation is reversed. Although observation was of fundamental importance, Comte’s positivism did not reduce knowledge to

sensory perception but regarded it as the product of an interaction between experience and innate mental faculties.

Whereas the natural sciences had all reached the positive state, the science of society—sociology—had yet to become fully positive. Sociology, however, was urgently required to end the political instability and moral anarchy that had plagued Europe for several centuries. Comte argued that the theological-military regime that had once dominated Europe had been irrevocably destroyed by the development of industry and the emergence of the positive sciences. The metaphysical doctrines of the sovereignty of the people, freedom of conscience, and individual rights had played an essential role in this destruction, but they were negative in their effects and incapable of guiding the sociopolitical reorganization required by modern industrial and scientific civilization and must now be abandoned.

In his *System of Positive Polity* (1851–54), Comte provided a detailed account of the polity of the future. Parliaments would no longer be required, and administrative and judicial activities would eventually be performed by leading industrialists, although until these had been socialized into abandoning their egotism and materialism, outstanding proletarians should occupy the highest positions in a temporary “republican dictatorship.” Spiritual (moral and intellectual) authority, which was essential for social stability through its educational and scientific activities, must be separated from the temporal (political) power, and would reside in a “sociocracy” of positivist sociologists. Comte recognized that an effective moral consensus must contain a powerful emotional element and elaborated a “Religion of Humanity.” This was a religion without a god, celebrating humanity and the achievements of its outstanding scientists and artists. He described in detail the rites and ceremonies of this new religion, in which women would perform the crucial roles of educating the young and “feminizing” male rationalism through their spontaneous altruism. Comte regarded the nation-state as a temporary form of political organization to be superseded by a Europe comprising regionally organized republics, united by the Religion of Humanity that would ultimately provide the moral foundations for a “universal Republic.”

The legacy of Comte's positivism is complex. His philosophy of science has attracted a great deal of criticism, e.g., for its rejection of causality and its restrictive conception of scientific method. Comte's political theory has been condemned for the authoritarianism implicit in the dismissal of individual rights and liberty of conscience, and for its prescriptions concerning the roles of the sexes, while parliamentary democracies, contrary to Comte's predictions, have proved capable of forming stable political systems.

Yet the defects (and, at times, absurdities) of Comte's positivism have to be weighed against some lasting contributions. Comte not only coined the term *sociology* but also has influenced the philosophy of science, political practice, and social theory. Philosophers and scientists have argued that the sciences increase in complexity from the natural to the social sciences and that the latter influence the former, which was Comte's position, while Albert Einstein reminded his fellow physicists of Comte's argument that observations were influenced by, rather than independent of, theories.

In the sphere of politics, Comte's impact was by no means confined to authoritarian movements. In France, for example, his argument that social science could guide political reconstruction was certainly claimed by the reactionary and anti-Semitic Action Française, but it also inspired some of the intellectuals and politicians who founded the democratic Third Republic.

Finally, although few, if any, social theorists would now refer to themselves as "positivists," the social sciences are nevertheless indebted to some of Comte's ideas. Although hostile to the psychology of his day, Comte was a pioneer in the sociology of the emotions in his focus on subjectivity and in his efforts to integrate the study of reason, emotion, and action into a sociological framework. Moreover, he explored the cognitive functions of early religion, arguing that animism provided a spontaneous, innate means of overcoming the vicious circle of the need for observations to construct a theory and the need of a theory to enable observations to be made and organized. For these reasons, Comtean positivism is likely to remain of interest to social scientists, historians, and philosophers of science.

Mike Hawkins

See also [Authority](#); [Comte, Auguste](#); [Conservatism](#); [French Political Thought](#); [Liberalism](#); [Methodology of Political Thought](#); [Nationalism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Political Sociology](#); [Progress](#); [Psychoanalysis and Political Thought](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Republicanism](#); [Saint-Simon, Henri de](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Totalitarianism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Nathan Widder Nathan Widder

Postmodernism and Political Theory

Postmodernism and political theory

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Postmodernism and Political Theory

Often invoked but seldom carefully defined, postmodernism has frequently amounted to a derogatory umbrella term covering a number of contemporary thinkers who can trace their intellectual lineage to Friedrich Nietzsche's critique of the modern condition and the value modernity places on truth, order, and rationality. Those who have been called "postmodernists" include Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, Theodor Adorno, Jean Baudrillard, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Jean-François Lyotard, and Richard Rorty. Readers familiar with their writings will know both that these thinkers disagree in fundamental respects and that only some of them accept the label while others explicitly reject it. Foucault, for example, maintains in an interview in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture* (1987, 33–34) that he does not understand what is meant by the term "modernity," let alone by the "postmodernity" that is supposed to reject it. On the other hand, Rorty embraces what he calls a "postmodern bourgeois liberalism" available to a few "lucky" advanced Western societies, but these societies are precisely the kind criticized by Lyotard from a position that calls itself "postmodern" and by Foucault from a position that refuses the term. Furthermore, in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (1989), Rorty distances himself from Foucault, with whom he says he has fundamental political disagreements, while aligning himself with Jürgen Habermas, probably the most vocal critic of postmodern thought, Rorty stating that he and Habermas have "merely" philosophical differences concerning how their shared political views are justified. Similar disagreements and differences

between Foucault and Derrida, Baudrillard and Foucault, and others placed in the postmodern camp illustrate quite well the problems that arise from using the term in the loose way it is still frequently used today.

General Traits, Approaches, and Criticisms

The general definitions of postmodernism that can be and are provided in large measure focus on what it is held to oppose. Among the ideas usually associated with it are “anti-foundationalism” (rejection of traditional philosophical justifications that make appeals to universal and sometimes transcendent principles), “anti-essentialism” (rejection of the idea of necessary or natural truths about human beings or their world, such as there being a fixed human nature or a natural purpose in the world), “anti-representationalism” (rejection of the idea that human language and concepts can mirror, either well or badly, an independent reality), and “anti-humanism” (rejection of the centrality given to the human subject as observer, knower, actor, and sometimes master in the world). A related idea, popularized by Baudrillard but often rejected by others placed under the postmodern label, is “hyperreality.” Its common denominator with other postmodern concepts lies in its rejection of traditional ideas of truth, representation, and reality. The “hyperreal” designates a context in which mass media and high-speed information processing and communication have engendered an experience of contemporary life that is subsumed by images that have no external referent, the effect being that no distinction remains between “reality” and simulation (a simulation being an image that lacks reference to an original that it copies). It is in this vein that Baudrillard contends that the 1991 Gulf War did not take place, insofar as what was presented to Western publics was a media spectacle that was not properly distinguishable from fantasy, making the conflict an atrocity that at best masqueraded as a war. All of these critical moves align with an “anti-rationalism” often taken to be postmodernism’s most fundamental feature. Modernity is usually considered to be an epoch of Enlightenment rationalism in which theological and metaphysical understandings of the world are replaced with rational, scientific ones that allow humanity to progress toward a more democratic, emancipated, and just society. It is in this respect that Immanuel Kant defines Enlightenment as humanity’s

emergence from self-incurred immaturity. Postmodernity, then, would challenge the assumptions behind this humanist ideal of progress.

In rejecting this Enlightenment ideal, thinkers associated with postmodernism frequently stress the constructed and contingent nature of truths frequently held to be scientific or indisputable, and the way accepted principles deemed to be progressive or emancipatory are often interwoven with problematic relations of power. This relativism is well illustrated by the critical approaches of genealogy (associated primarily with Nietzsche and Foucault) and deconstruction (associated primarily with Derrida). Genealogy can be summarized as an examination of concepts, ideas, and values that aims to reveal the impurity of their origins, excavating forms of power that infiltrate ideas considered today to be true, or traces of immorality and hatred within our most cherished values. Nietzsche's genealogy of morality, for example, maintains that contemporary ideals of democracy and equality rest on a hatred or resentment toward what is different, while Foucault's genealogy of the modern prison system argues that its apparent humaneness in relation to old forms of punishment and torture rests on the establishment of new disciplinary power relations that delineate and police standards of normality and abnormality throughout contemporary society. As suggested by its everyday meaning as a family tree or lineage, genealogy is something of a historical study. But it is best considered "quasi-historical," as it contests the idea of a historical truth that could be identified and represented. The subtitle of Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morality* is "a polemic," which should indicate quite clearly the truth value he places on the story he tells there. Derridean deconstruction can be considered an approach that locates elements within discourses and texts that are incompatible with the dominant meanings attributed to them and that must be repressed, excluded, or forgotten for these dominant meanings to function. Deconstruction operates on the idea that there is a plural and heterogeneous excess of meaningfulness in language, so that the fixed meanings that are necessary for established truths and values to operate depend on a violence done to this excess. To reveal this suppressed excess, however, is not to establish some new truth in language. Rather, it is to make this plurality irreducible, so that established meanings can lose some of their sense of necessity, the result being that the precise meaning of a discourse or text becomes undecidable. This

deconstructed reality thus makes those affected by language, including listeners and readers, freer than they would otherwise have been in their consciousness of reality.

Habermas's chief criticism of postmodern thought is that it rests on a "performative contradiction," whereby it presupposes the very idea it rejects. Attacking truth as a construction, for example, asserts a universally applicable truth claim; holding that there is no Truth with a capital "T" involves making a claim to Truth. The problem is thus one of self-referentiality. In contrast, Habermas's own theory of communicative action tries to articulate necessities inherent in the nature of language and discourse that can serve as a basis for agreed-upon norms of truthfulness and validity. More generally, Habermas champions the Enlightenment project that he feels postmodern thinkers from Nietzsche to Foucault have jettisoned, holding that their rejections of Enlightenment ideals of rationality and progress rest on a refusal to accept the distinctions among moral, scientific, and aesthetic truth claims that modern rationalist philosophy has properly established. There are, of course, responses to these Habermasian criticisms. Nietzsche, for example, holds that the problem is not truth per se but the "will to truth." This will, he argues, demands that truth be universal, simple, useful, and above all, good—demands that are moral and aesthetic in nature. Foucault, Lyotard, and others similarly respond to Habermas that they do not reject reason, progress, or human subjectivity and emancipation per se but the sacrosanct status often accorded to particular understandings of them. These replies in turn point to a more general problem: That just as the term postmodernism, applying to a diverse array of thinkers, is vague and ambiguous, so too is the modern/postmodern distinction that often structures these debates.

Lyotard's Postmodern Condition

Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* ([1979] 1984) is perhaps the first use of the term in political theory. Lyotard defines postmodernism as "incredulity toward metanarratives" (xxiv), the latter being grand frameworks that organize knowledge and discourse, but he adds that incredulity toward metanarratives does not imply belief in the possibility of escaping them. Lyotard begins by noting how technological

advancements have tended to reduce knowledge to what can be digitized, and that information is now a commodity, produced in order to be sold and moving at such high speeds that it cannot be controlled by governments or other traditional centers of power. He maintains that these changes are banal and that the thesis about the effects of the information age is contestable, but he says these changes become significant insofar as they problematize dominant paradigms of knowledge and progress. The postmodern condition, then, is not simply about knowledge developing and being communicated faster, but how this change affects our trust in the ideals of knowledge and truth.

The center of Lyotard's thesis is his analysis of "language games," which are modes of discourse governed by rules. The language game of denotation, for example, involves statements in which a knower makes a truth claim about a referent to an addressee—for example, "the Earth is 93 million miles from the sun"—and rests on rules concerning how such truths can be verified. A performative language game, conversely, involves statements that carry out actions, such as when a minister says, "I now pronounce you husband and wife," and it invokes rules about when and where a speaker has sufficient authority to perform these acts. The rules of language games are not self-legitimizing, and so their justification must instead refer to other heterogeneous games that suffer the same difficulty, in the same way that one might justify following the specific rules of chess by appealing to the game's history or simply to the implied agreement between chess players to follow the standard rules. However, these appeals then beg the question of why the history or some implicit agreement should matter. Language games are thus always unstable and open to change and even sudden mutation.

Lyotard maintains that modern science, which rests on rules concerning objectivity of method and correct standards of proof, disparages the knowledge claims of nonscientific language games. Nevertheless, as it cannot legitimate its rules—one cannot demonstrate scientifically the validity of science's standards of validity—science has had to invoke a language game of narrative, and specifically the narrative of progress, to justify its dominant place in modern discourse. The "delegitimization" of science occurs as progress narratives become unbelievable; the claim that

even if science and technology do not discover the world's truth, they at least make life better, is undermined by the way this claim rests on a prescriptive language game of good and bad that differs from science's language game of truth and falsity. For Lyotard, however, this situation opens up the possibility for a "postmodern science" that would search not for stable and universal truths but instead for examples of paradox, instability, and undecidability, such as in the case of chaos theory. This postmodern science would, in turn, be suspicious and critical of ideals of consensus and efficiency, holding that consensus depends on excluding that which is heterogeneous or incompatible with established views.

In the appendix to *The Postmodern Condition*, Lyotard answers Habermas's criticisms by holding that postmodernity arises from a "loss of reality" in which established truths become problematic. The modern age, he contends, arose with the same loss of reality that followed when religious and metaphysical ideas lost their legitimacy, and in this regard the postmodern condition is not some sort of fin-de-siècle rejection of modernity, and indeed does not follow modernity at all, but instead is modernity's precondition and therefore precedes it: "Postmodernism thus understood is not modernism at its end but in the nascent state, and this state is constant" ([1979] 1984, 79). The difference between the modern and the postmodern, for Lyotard, is that while modernity decries this loss of reality and seeks new forms of assurance, the postmodern denies itself this solace and instead seeks to experiment and invent in a world where certainties have dissolved. This distinction may suggest a kind of playfulness or frivolity that is often attributed to postmodernism by its critics. For Lyotard, however, this experimentation is driven by a serious refusal of any project that would seek to reduce or reconcile the heterogeneity of language games and discourses.

Nathan Widder

See also [Foucault, Michel](#); [Habermas, Jürgen](#); [Heidegger, Martin](#); [Historicism](#); [Idealism](#); [Ideology](#); [Methodology of Political Thought](#); [Modernism](#); [Modernization](#); [Nietzsche, Friedrich](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Progress](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Power

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Power

Power is one of the most frequently used terms not only in political thought but also in everyday talk about politics. In fact, it is common to associate politics with power and to view the study of politics as the study of political power. Generally speaking, the term “power,” which comes from the Latin *potere*, refers to the ability to act or to change. In political thought, the term is often preceded by the adjectives social or political.

Common language usage can refer to the power of concrete individuals, of certain social roles (presidents, teachers), of social groups (nations, classes, the people), or of more abstract notions (the power of ideas, the power of the law). Furthermore, the terms *social* power or *political* power can be used as generic terms to describe a host of asymmetric social relations, such as force, coercion, domination, inducement, or persuasion, but they are also used as distinct from these. A specialized body of scholarship in modern political theory focused on exploring the relationship between these common usages so as to better capture the meaning of power. Since the way social and political power are understood shapes the way they are studied, this specialized study of the meaning of power serves as a linchpin among normative political theory, social theory, and empirical social science.

In premodern and early modern political thought, power was mainly used to refer to capacities that stem from established, mostly formal, social roles: the power of the monarch, the parent, the slaveowner, and so on. Philosophers focused on explaining the scope of the power attached to each

role and the relationship between them and, for the most part, did not question the asymmetries embedded in the roles themselves. In contrast, modern political philosophers try to explain the power attached to various social roles. The dominant understanding of political power in modern political thought, which was offered by Max Weber, conceptualizes power as the ability to make people take action that they would have not taken otherwise. This understanding of power, often illustrated through analogies to Newtonian mechanics, associates power with a lack of choice. As such, this conception of power fits well with the liberal view that economic markets with no government intervention are free markets and with the view that the power in democratic regimes lies with the people. This view of power has been the basis of an empirical research program that was based on measuring the relationship between expressed preferences and policy outcomes. Behaviorist political scientists such as Robert Dahl relied on this conception of power to claim that there was no concentration of political power in post-World War II United States.

Critics of this research program argued that the conventional conception of power fails to capture the real dynamics of modern politics in the United States and elsewhere, and that this failure is in part the result of the shortcomings of its very understanding of the meaning of political power. Marxists argued that market interactions have to be understood in the context of the capitalist mode of production in which they are situated. They argued that structural and systemic features of society have the capacity to empower social groups, such as capitalists or wage laborers, in different ways. These structural powers shape the topography of the social milieu in which social interactions take place and the options that are available to different social players. For example, they argue that when a recently unemployed worker takes a new job for lower wage, her actions should be understood in the context of the structural asymmetries of power, even if force or coercion were not involved in the decision. Feminist philosophers argued in a similar way that the patriarchal structure of society shapes gender power relations that are inherently asymmetric.

Other political philosophers argued that the experience of free choice, be it in the marketplace or in the voting booth, can itself be the product of power relations. Power, in this view, has the capacity to shape the linguistic and

cultural mediums through which social interactions take place and within which choices are being made. Steven Lukes argued that political power sometimes operates by making people want things that are against their real interests. Michel Foucault went a step further and argued that wants and interests are always a product of power, which he took to be ubiquitous. He explored the ways in which what he called regimes of truth embedded in techniques of governance create an environment in which the experience of choice is itself manufactured. While for Foucault power produces the experience of agency, Hannah Arendt understood power as the product of collective discussion and decision-making among equals. In her view, the power of people in democracy is not simply the sum total of the choices of individuals but the product of their acting together to create shared norms.

Amit Ron

See also [Arendt, Hannah](#); [Civil Society](#); [Class](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Foucault, Michel](#); [Methodology of Political Thought](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [Weber, Max](#)

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Cornelis de Waal Cornelis de Waal

Pragmatism

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Pragmatism

Pragmatism is a method for doing philosophy that originated in the early 1870s in Cambridge, Massachusetts, which developed into a school of thought. The classical pragmatists include Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914), William James (1842–1910), Ferdinand Schiller (1864–1937), John Dewey (1859–1952), and George Herbert Mead (1863–1931). Overall, we find in Peirce primarily a logical interpretation of pragmatism (with logic being construed broadly), in James and Schiller a psychological one, and in Mead and Dewey a biosocial one. The movement received fierce criticism, especially from European philosophers, causing it to all but disappear in the early decades of the twentieth century. In particular, James's comments referring to that truth as the cash value of our ideas suggested that pragmatism was the philosophical outcome of America's cheap commercialism. During the last three decades of the century, however, a revival took place. Key figures in the new pragmatism include Richard Rorty (1931–2007), Jürgen Habermas (1929–), Karl-Otto Apel (1922–), Hilary Putnam (1926–), and Cornel West (1953–).

Central to pragmatism is the following criterion of meaning, called the pragmatic maxim, which originates with Peirce: "Consider what effects, which might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of those effects is the whole of our conception of the object" (Haack and Lane 2006, 138). Although similar to the verification principle of the logical positivists, the pragmatist criterion lacks the shortcomings of the latter. When applied to core

concepts, the pragmatist criterion of meaning has profound consequences for any conceptual enterprise (philosophy, physics, political science, etc.). For instance, applying the criterion to the concept of truth has resulted in a very different notion of truth, which is now generally referred to as the pragmatic conception of truth. However, even among the classical pragmatists there is little agreement on how Peirce's criterion is to be read. As Schiller once quipped, there are as many pragmatisms as there are pragmatists. Most significantly, we find with Peirce and Dewey a realist interpretation of the principle and with James and Schiller a nominalist interpretation.

Despite their inner disagreements, a distinct philosophical movement, or school, can be discerned. Taking a strong anti-Cartesian stance, pragmatists reject the dualisms that mar modern philosophy, and they reject the modern quest for an absolute foundation of our knowledge. The result is a thoroughgoing reconstruction of philosophy. Most importantly, pragmatists reject the longstanding sharp separation between theory and practice, which resulted in an impotent skepticism-prone "spectator theory of knowledge" (Dewey's phrase). In its stead pragmatists seek an intimate connection between meaning and action: For a concept to have meaning, it must conceivably make a difference in practice. Other key dualisms pragmatists reject are the mind-body dualism and the dualism of individual versus society. The pragmatist's rejection of dualisms is related to their naturalized conceptions of mind, self, and knowledge, and to their application of the principle of evolution, not only when explaining the origin of thought but also when describing its development. Pragmatists consider themselves empiricists, but compared with their predecessors, they maintain a broader and more fundamental conception of what counts as empirical data. For that reason James speaks of a "radical empiricism." The pragmatists reject skepticism (that we can be wrong about all our beliefs) but embrace fallibilism (that we can be wrong about any single one of our beliefs) and a critical common-sensism.

The pragmatism that emerged after its revival is generally referred to as *neo-Pragmatism*. Neo-pragmatists, largely following Rorty, tend toward nominalism and relativism, relating meaning and truth to what allows us to carry the conversation forward. Rejecting the charge of relativism, neo-

pragmatists prefer to speak of our ethnocentric predicament. In practice we cannot but privilege our own community, with its epistemic standards, even though there is no noncircular justification for doing that. The term *new pragmatism* is used for philosophers, such as Hilary Putnam, who seek to distance themselves from the Rorty-inspired neo-Pragmatism. New pragmatists accept a more robust notion of truth, holding that there is such a thing as “getting it right,” so that merely aiming for the approval of our peers (that is, for solidarity), which Rorty argued is all we can strive for, is not enough.

Some parallels can be drawn with other schools of thought. Pragmatism, like Marxism, sees the aim of philosophy no longer as a matter of pure thought but as one of action. Moreover, like Marxism and existentialism, pragmatism sees the world, and humans themselves, as unfinished. For the pragmatist the universe is open-ended: what will, might, or can happen cannot be determined in advance.

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See also [Dewey, John](#); [Methodology of Political Thought](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Positivism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Progress

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Progress

Progress is a complex idea that has bearing on philosophy, politics, social theory, and history. It is linked to the “progressive” political tradition that has been associated with social democracy and egalitarian liberalism. As far as modern political thought is concerned, progress as an idea is primarily a product of the Enlightenment and became connected to classical liberalism largely through the work of John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer. Auguste Comte has also been very influential in the development of the idea of progress, owing to his arguments that society is evolutionary and that positivism provides a means to understand society in a scientific and rational manner. Philosophers have engaged with the idea of progress and the question of whether or not philosophy is moving forward as a discipline by solving problems.

Both the American Revolution and the French Revolution prompted theoretical discussions of the importance of progress in consideration of whether a better society and political system could be constructed. Rationalism and faith in the potential of technological advancement played an important role in such revolutionary discourse. During the Scottish Enlightenment, Adam Smith in particular critiqued the preexisting view that considered wealth creation to be a zero-sum game, arguing instead that the potential for the advancement of wealth was unlimited. This view had significant repercussions for political economy and has been lauded by some later economists and historians as the idea underpinning the step-

change moment in capitalism away from mercantilism toward free markets and laissez-faire.

Progress and its antithesis, decline, were the dominant ideas in history and politics between the Enlightenment and World War II, despite some disagreement on what exactly constituted progress and whether it could be measured quantitatively. Faith in inevitable progress was rocked during the middle years of the twentieth century by a series of events. First, the Great Depression dented confidence in economic progress in the Western world, and its aftermath saw the emergence of managed capitalism. Moreover, the rise of extremist parties in Europe, World War II, and the Holocaust during the 1930s and 1940s made social progress and its promises of greater freedom and the ability of individuals to shape society in a positive way appear unfulfilled.

The rise of neoliberalism as a political force in the 1980s and beyond corresponded with a return of the belief in progress, although it was now tied more to the individual than to society at large. At the same time, postmodernist thinkers argued that progress was an illusory idea and had been measured only in narrow ways. Postmodernism, in rejecting the possibility of a grand theory explaining history, questions not only whether progress has occurred but also whether it can occur at all. In turn, other thinkers have responded to the postmodernist critique by attacking its relativism and lack of empiricism. Marxist and Marxian theorists have been especially prominent in the anti-postmodernist discourse.

Progress and Political Thought

Progress and liberalism have gone hand-in-hand for the majority of the latter's existence as a body of political theory, a link that has been especially prominent during the capitalist era. The idea has, however, been interpreted in various ways by the various different strands of liberal thought. Classical liberals and neoliberals have tended to consider progress as an individualist phenomenon, emphasizing the Smithian idea that self-interest has unintended benefits for society at large through economic growth in particular. Social liberals, such as the New Liberals, have instead interpreted progress as a societal force, leading them to embrace

collectivism and a more egalitarian approach to political questions. Comte and Spencer have historically been especially important influences on the evolution of this strand of thought, and for the most part, social democrats have interpreted progress similarly.

Marxism has also had a prominent place in the historiography of progress. Karl Marx argued that history consisted of a series of stages defined by their dominant mode of production. This system of “historical materialism” was attached to Marx’s political schema and to his prophecy that capitalism would be replaced by socialism and eventually communism. This sense of the inevitable progress to socialism has been a powerful force in politics, although it has also been much revised (especially by democratic socialists). Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer’s development of the “negative dialectic” to explain the possibility of a return to barbarism has had a significant critical impact on present Marxist thought and its treatment of the idea of progress.

Conservatives, in contrast to liberals and Marxists, have had an ambiguous relationship with the idea of progress. Historically they have emphasized tradition and maintenance of established order as key concerns and therefore appear anti-progressive. More recently, however, many conservatives have embraced the neoliberal idea of economic progress, and some have also tried to present themselves as socially progressive too, indicative perhaps of the strength of progressive political arguments in the West.

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See also [Capitalism](#); [Comte, Auguste](#); [Conservatism](#); [Dialectic\(s\)](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Environmentalism](#), [Ecology](#), and [Political Thought](#); [Globalization](#); [Historicism](#); [Liberalism](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Mill, John Stuart](#); [Modernization](#); [Neoconservatism](#); [Neoliberalism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Planning](#); [Positivism](#); [Postmodernism and Political Thought](#); [Scottish Enlightenment](#); [Socialism](#); [Spencer, Herbert](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [Utopianism](#)

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Property, Theories of

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Property, Theories of

Property is one of the principal constitutive features of all developed societies, and it has been a key issue for political thinkers ever since the time of the ancient Greeks. Although in everyday usage, property is often identified with things which can be owned, in fact it always describes a relationship (often a legal relationship) between persons (or other legal entities) over an assemblage of rights to the use of things (some of which, as in the case of intellectual property, are very much immaterial). Very few people have ever argued for the abolition of *all* property. Much more typically, the argument has been about what sorts of property relationships and what sorts of social practices are just, efficient, and equitable. The key question surrounding property has always been this: who controls which resources and why?

Greeks and Romans

Almost all property talk is closely tied to the idea of law (whether divine, natural, or positive) and to the idea of historical continuity (almost all arguments for private property require that something quite specific must have happened in the knowable past to make it legitimate). Of especial significance in the story of property in the modern West are the twin influences of the Christian Bible and Roman law. Of course, much turns upon the (very variable) ways in which these sources have been interpreted but they certainly constitute a widely shared resource. And, insofar as one

of the trends in the West since 1750 has been to “secularize” property talk, it is clear that often unacknowledged traces of a Romano-Christian heritage remain. In fact, the origins of modern Western property thinking can be taken back still further to the work of Plato and Aristotle.

Although Plato’s view of how property should be organized in the best and/or the best-possible state is nuanced, he is certainly a source for the continuing suspicion that property in the hands of private individuals is likely to be a source of conflict and division. Aristotle, by contrast, is one of the first to articulate what are perhaps the most important claims made about the practical advantages of privately-owned property (which we can find repeated right down to the present). He identifies five key strengths of a private property regime:

1. it avoids quarrels and complaints about access to resources,
2. it leads to improvement in the care devoted to property,
3. it facilitates friendship,
4. it fosters natural pleasures, in particular self-love, and
5. it makes possible the exercise of virtues such as generosity and moderation.

Aristotle is also perhaps the first to give clear expression to another idea familiar to moderns, the identification of “the tragedy of the commons”: that, without the designation of private owners, common resources will tend to be over-exploited to a point which is in no-one’s interests.

It is to Cicero, writing in the last years of the Roman Republic, that we owe the first clear articulation of the claim that the state comes into being to protect the *prior* rights of private property holders and that this is indeed the primary function of the law. This came to be a commonplace of the Roman Law as expressed in the *Corpus Iuris Civilis* prepared under the Emperor Justinian in the sixth century (*Justinian’s Institutes*, 1987, 535). Here it was said that “Justice is the constant and perpetual desire to give to each one that to which he is entitled.” This authoritative definition was to be repeated through the ancient and medieval world and on into the modern period. It is also to the Roman law that we should look for the clearest statement of the claims of *first occupation* (that property title should be granted, exclusively and in perpetuity, to the first occupier of any land or resource), a

supposition that continues to do an enormous amount of work in the contemporary world of property (consider, for example, the jurisprudence that surrounds the claims of aboriginal peoples around the globe against majority communities of incomers).

The Bible and the Christian Church

The Christian heritage is more ambiguous. For at least a millennium and a half, the Christian church was an authoritative source of moral and political values throughout the West. From humble origins, it had come, by the end of the medieval period, to be the single largest property-holder in Western Europe. The testimony of the Bible and, particularly, the reported teachings of Jesus Christ were troubling for the established church. Questioned by a rich young man, Jesus had famously said that it was easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Although there was (and is) an ongoing Christian tradition that denounces material possessions, the teaching of the mainstream church was that it was avarice and not possessions that were sinful. Given Man's corrupted nature, property was necessary (maybe not sinful, but certainly not a work of perfection). Two things followed: that one should use one's wealth to do good works (this being supposedly the example set by the church itself) and second, and quite crucially, that there was a sense in which one's *superfluities* (that which was more than one needed to support one's self and one's duties) belonged to the poor. In the hands of Thomas Aquinas, writing in the thirteenth century, private property was a legitimate addition to the God-given natural law, though it was always liable to be over-ridden by God's prior commitment to the preservation of all men. Although the established Church was quite fully reconciled to the legitimacy of private property, the "heretical" claim that private property was sinful made frequent and embarrassing reappearances throughout the history of the church in Western Europe (notably in the battle over Franciscan poverty in the fourteenth century, in the mobilization of the Anabaptists in the sixteenth, and the practice of the Diggers in the seventeenth centuries).

Locke

In the early modern period (in this instance the second half of the seventeenth century), the single most influential thinker on property is almost certainly John Locke. Locke and his arguments, or at least what are widely imagined to be his arguments, are still very widely invoked, especially in North America (in the work of Robert Nozick and Richard Epstein, to take two prominent examples). Locke wrestled with a problem that had perplexed nearly all Christian political thinkers: since God had gifted his creation to the whole of humankind (this was a commonplace which Locke, with most others, accepted), how could this have been transferred into private ownership except and unless this was sanctioned by the whole of humankind, thus dispossessed (which consent Locke deemed to be impossible)? Locke's (in)famous response was that since I own myself (though our relationship to the previous owner of our selves, God, was not quite clear) when I labor upon that which God has gifted to humankind in common I "mix my labor" with what has previously been common and, *in so doing*, I make it my own. There were limitations upon my appropriation (I must not allow that which I had appropriated to go to waste, I must leave "as much and as good" for later appropriators etc.) but these limits did not relate to my "share" of a pool of common resources. So long as I did not breach the provisos, there was no real limit to what I could come to own. Locke's account seemed deeply problematic to many of his contemporaries as it does even to some of those who want to sponsor what is essentially a "Lockean" defense of private property now (again, Robert Nozick is a good example). But this has never prevented Locke's views from doing an extraordinary amount of justificatory work in the rise of a profoundly unequal liberal capitalist social and economic order (globally, but, above all, in the United States).

After Locke

In the period that followed, Locke's ideas (or ideas very much like them) were extremely influential; especially the claimed status of the first occupier and the assertion that all value was created by labor (which was sometimes read in a much more radical way than Locke had imagined or intended). In the work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (whose own thinking on property is notoriously ambivalent) and a little later in Immanuel Kant, we find a reinstatement of the insistence that legitimate property can only be

the product of a general social agreement (and that all property prior to this is “provisional”). In Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, we find the view that the property of individuals must be subjected to some broader form of social (that is, state) regulation if it is to satisfy the reasons which alone can justify the existence of private claims upon finite resources.

A rather different view was taken by David Hume, the leading philosopher of the Scottish Enlightenment, writing in the first half of the eighteenth century. For Hume, the property order was just whatever had happened to get itself established and worked. It was likely that the historical process through which current distributions of property had become established was violent and rapacious—certainly, there was no question of its being just (and, indeed, no way of knowing if it had been just). A society of private property worked; it promoted the sciences and the arts. It was better for everyone (including the poor) that it should continue and, for this to happen, we needed laws which recognized and secured the stability of existing patterns of distribution. We find echoes of this argument in the utilitarian defense of the security of property developed in the early nineteenth century by Jeremy Bentham. In this instance, Locke was rejected but in order to draw quite conservative conclusions.

Marx

This was not, of course, the case with Karl Marx. Although Marx does mention Locke, he is really speaking to the account of a slightly later generation of political economists including David Ricardo and, perhaps above all, Adam Smith. Property is a category that is central to Marx’s understanding of the social relations that underpin humankind’s productive life and, within this and most crucially, in his analysis of capitalism. In any and every historical epoch, property expresses the relationship between those who produce value for society and those who expropriate that value. It is this relationship that defines the principal contending classes in any given mode of production and which establishes that the relationship between them must necessarily be antagonistic, a conflict over the claiming of the value produced by the labor of the subordinate class. Capitalist property is just the previously appropriated labor of the working class. For

Marx, the origins of capitalist property lie not in the industry or the frugality or the inventiveness of individual capitalists but in the violent expropriation of the previous property holders (mostly peasants) forcing a now propertyless working class into selling its labor power to the owners of capital who extract surplus value from the deployment of the former's labor power without due compensation. When Marx proposes "the expropriation of the expropriators," he is not proposing the elimination of all property. In the *Communist Manifesto*, he writes, "we by no means intend to abolish th[e] personal appropriation of the products of labor, an appropriation that is made for the maintenance and reproduction of human life, and that leaves no surplus wherewith to command the labor of others" (Marx, *Communist Manifesto* in *The Revolutions of 1848*, 1973, 81).

Under a number of imperatives, in the twentieth century ideas of property became increasingly decontested. In a famous intervention, Thomas Grey even argued that we should stop talking about property altogether because in a world of increasingly complex legal relationships between people about the use of things, "property" is an unhelpful umbrella term that no longer connotes anything distinctive in the world around us. But a world of increasing inequalities of wealth and income and depleting natural resources is perhaps the wrong time and place to abandon our interest in property.

Chris Pierson

See also [Alienation](#); [Anarchism](#); [Bentham, Jeremy](#); [Capitalism](#); [Class](#); [Communism](#), [Varieties of](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Fichte, Johann Gottlieb](#); [Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich](#); [Hume, David](#); [Justice](#); [Kant, Immanuel](#); [Liberalism](#); [Libertarianism](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Locke, John](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Nozick, Robert](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Planning](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Rousseau, Jean-Jacques](#); [Smith, Adam](#); [Socialism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [Utopianism](#)

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Proportional Representation

Proportional representation

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Proportional Representation

Electoral systems of proportional representation (PR) seek to ensure that the share of seats a political party wins in the legislature closely matches its portion of the popular vote. There are many types of PR systems. Party list, additional-member, and single-transferable-vote are the most often used variants. However, all PR systems share two basic characteristics. First, they use large multimember districts—where five, ten, or more seats may be contested—instead of single-member districts. Second, PR systems are not winner-take-all. The multiple seats are awarded according to the proportion of the popular vote won by each party. In a ten-member district, for example, if a party receives 30% of the votes, it receives three of the ten seats.

Proportional representation was invented in Europe in the mid-nineteenth century as an alternative to plurality and majority elections—winner-take-all systems in which only the candidates with the most votes win office. The system described by Thomas Hare as modified by John Stuart Mill in *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861) became one of the best known proposals of the period. As suffrage became universal and mass political parties began to emerge, there was an increased desire to ensure that a party's representation in the legislature corresponded to its strength in the electorate, something that plurality-majority systems could not guarantee. By 1920, most countries in continental Europe had adopted PR. That trend continued throughout the twentieth century, with most emerging

democracies in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union adopting proportional or semiproportional electoral systems.

There is no disagreement among election experts that proportional representation produces fairer and more accurate representation for parties. Plurality-majority systems routinely distort representation. The largest party typically gets many more legislative seats than it deserves based on voter support, with smaller parties being underrepresented or denied representation entirely. In Massachusetts, for example, the Democrats habitually win all seats in the state's U.S. House delegation even though Republicans make up almost a third of voters.

However, there is considerable disagreement about whether the effects that PR has on legislatures are desirable. Because PR allows representation for several large and small parties, it tends to produce multiparty legislatures in which a coalition is often necessary to amass the majority of votes necessary to pass legislation. In contrast, plurality-majority elections tend to encourage two-party systems in which one party usually wins a majority of legislative seats and is able to make policy all by itself. However, policy deadlocks can still occur in such systems when the legislature's two houses are divided between the two parties, or the legislature and the president are of different parties.

Opponents of PR typically argue that one-party governments tend to be more stable and long lasting and suggest that coalition governments are liable to be weak and prone to gridlock. Italy and Israel are often cited as examples of these problems. Coalitions are also thought to be less accountable to the public than one-party governments and to give too much power to small parties. Michael Pinto-Duschinsky (1999) maintains that some parties become semipermanent members of coalitions for decades and are difficult to throw out of office. Ferdinand A. Hermens (1941), writing during World War II when fascism and communism were threatening Europe, argued that proportional representation could give encouragement to extreme parties of the left or right and allow them to gain legitimacy by getting a foothold in the legislature.

Proponents of proportional representation reject most of these criticisms, arguing that the vast majority of countries that have used PR have had

stable and efficient governments and have not been plagued by extremist factions. Proponents also maintain that PR produces more inclusive legislatures—ones that better reflect the variety of political groups and the range of political views in a society. Arend Lijphart (1999) argues that legislatures with multiparty ruling coalitions embody a form of “consensus democracy” that encourages power-sharing, bargaining, deliberation, and compromise in the policy-making process. G. Bingham Powell’s research (2000) found that these power-sharing coalitions have a clear advantage over single-party majorities in creating policy congruence between citizens and legislators. This quality suggests that policies coming out of PR legislatures tend to be more democratic in that they are closer to what most people want.

Other proponents (such as Douglas Amy [2002]) have claimed additional advantages of proportional representation, including increased voter choice at the polls, higher voter turnout, increased election of women, fairer representation of racial and ethnic minorities, and the virtual elimination of gerrymandering—the manipulation of district lines for unfair political advantage.

Douglas J. Amy

See also [Class](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Ethnicity and Political Thought](#); [Liberalism](#); [Mill, John Stuart](#); [Mass Society](#); [Michels, Robert](#); [Mosca, Gaetano](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Power](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Proudhon, Pierre-Joseph

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Proudhon, Pierre-Joseph

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–65) became famous in 1840 when his book *Qu'est-ce que la propriété?* attacked the idle rich and defended anarchism. Best known during his life for his “mutualist” socialism, his writings remained a touchstone for opponents of Marx in the First International, for Italian, Swiss, and Spanish anarchists in the late nineteenth century, and for federalists and syndicalists in subsequent eras.

Proudhon was born in a modest neighborhood in Besançon, France, although he spent much of his youth in the countryside of the Jura. He was proud of his humble origins but was a precociously bright youth and won scholarships to attend classes in Besançon and Paris. He always insisted, however, that his real education took place in the workshop, where mental tasks were joined with manual dexterity, practical application, and working-class solidarity. As a young man, he worked as a printer, and for several years (1836–43), he and some partners operated a printing house that lost money and left him in debt. Subsequently (1843–47), he worked at a Lyon shipping firm, which exposed him to manufacturing and business practices.

Proudhon became famous for his numerous publications that contained biting satires of the wealthy, trenchant analyses of socioeconomic inequities, and indignant attacks of coercive, bureaucratic, authoritarian institutions. His provocative retort to the question posed by the title of his 1840 book *What Is Property* was “It is theft!” In fact, his position was not as radical as this memorable epigram might suggest. Proudhon attacked the

forms of property that generated an income but required no labor, such as the interest and rents that filled the pockets of the parasitic “idle class.” He was careful to distinguish this “property” from “possessions” (that is, the land and tools necessary for a modest income), which he defended.

Equally provocative was his embrace of the label “anarchist” in the same book of 1840. Proudhon wished to replace government institutions ruling “from above” with associations organized “from below,” but he did not advocate violence or revolution. He called for society to be animated by a social morality that would lead humans to recognize the dignity of their fellow citizens and to put aside their personal interests for the larger social good, what he referred to as an “immanent” morality that, in effect, combined a secularized version of Christian morality with a modified version of republican virtue.

Proudhon’s “anarchist” attack on property was part of his larger proposal to create “progressive associations” for the educational and economic benefit of workers, and for the general and peaceful transformation of society. He believed that associations controlled by the workers themselves, and that combined work and education, would promote fraternal ties and economic efficiencies. These associations would be able to push aside idle “property owners” who inappropriately skimmed off profits and, in addition, introduce a “fair” evaluation of goods, based on labor and not on the “arbitrary” system of supply and demand. Unlike other “associative socialists” in France at this time, Proudhon insisted that government intervention be minimized and ultimately eliminated. There should be no government ownership of property and no centralized decision making. In 1846, Proudhon referred to this formula for socioeconomic justice as “mutualism.” Since this time, *mutualist anarchism* and *mutualist socialism* have referred to an antistatist agenda of nonviolent socioeconomic transformation that is centered in the action and coordination of autonomous workers’ associations. The masthead of one of his papers stated his goal clearly: “What is the producer in actual society?—Nothing. What should he be?—Everything.”

Proudhon was active politically for a brief period during the French Second Republic, and even tried unsuccessfully to establish a “Bank of the People”

in 1849. But his attacks of the new president of the republic, Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte, got him thrown into prison for three years and ended his short political career. He also spent some years in exile after the 1858 publication of the book he considered his best, *De la Justice dans la révolution et dans l'Eglise*. But it was his writings, not his actions, which made him famous. As one commentator put it, when Proudhon found himself with pen in hand, he had a fit of eloquence.

K. Steven Vincent

See also [Anarchism](#); [Bakunin, Michael](#); [Civil Society](#); [Federalism](#); [French Political Thought](#); [French Revolution](#); [Political Thought of the](#); [Godwin, William](#); [Justice](#); [Kropotkin, Peter A.](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Property, Theories of](#); [Revolution](#); [Socialism](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Syndicalism](#); [Utopianism](#)

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Psychoanalysis and Political Thought

Psychoanalysis and political thought

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Psychoanalysis and Political Thought

Psychology, in its various guises, is concerned with the psychic characteristics and capabilities of human subjects both as individuals and as members of groups, institutions, and societies. Political thought has always made assumptions about human psychology. However, with the development of psychology as a clinical and academic field, political and social theorists have frequently turned to one or another psychological theory to supplement their analyses of political life. Psychology has been turned to in order to fill a gap in analyses that relies unduly on either simple assumptions about the strength of human reason or, alternatively, that treat human subjects as structural or cultural dupes or dopes, by presuming a thoroughgoing determination of subjectivity by the economy, the culture, or any other structure. This corrective turn is most apparent in the take-up of psychoanalysis, which, almost since its inception, has been turned to by a sequence of major social and political theorists interested in analyzing political life without eclipsing the complex psychology of the human subject. Psychoanalysis is the psychological theory that has been of most significance for political thought, as it addresses the human subject as a person who both reasons and rationalizes, who is driven by passions, and who forms passionate attachments to institutions, ideologies, and ways of life.

Although political thought addresses political life in its multiplicity, the recurrent master theme has been a concern with the problem of order, its maintenance, and sometimes, its transformation. Psychoanalysis also

addresses this problem of order, ordering, and occasional transformation by focusing on aspects of both the individual person as a reasoning, desiring, and socialized subject who is also discontented, and on groups, institutions, and other collectivities, including the nation, as powerful influences on human subjectivity. The pre-history of the pioneering approach of Sigmund Freud in this area lies largely in the group or “crowd” psychology of Gustav Le Bon (1841–1931), whose *The Crowd. A Study of the Popular Mind* (1895) emphasized the destructive power of the masses as evidenced in the violent outbursts which characterized key phases of the French Revolution of 1789. To Le Bon the crowd expressed a collective mentality or mental unity which by a process of contagion weakened individual judgment and inhibitions and unleashed the savage destructive instincts thinly veiled by the pastiche of civilization. In *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921), amongst other works, Freud would develop this conception of a regression to an instinctive state and the creation of a common or group mentality, and used it to construct a more general theory of human aggression.

Sigmund Freud

Sigmund Freud developed a complex account of the human subject as divided, decentered, and conflict-ridden. Drawing on his clinical work and his analysis of dreams, errors, symptoms, and jokes, in “A Difficulty in the Path of Psycho-Analysis” Freud (1953, 143) proposed that “the ego is not master in its own house” because of the pervasiveness of unconscious processes. Rather than being “master,” the ego is subjected to the relentless pressure of the drives seeking realization, on the one hand, and the repressive force of the censoring agency, the super-ego, on the other. These unconscious forces are beyond the mastery of the human subject, whose thoughts, desires, motivations, and reasons are typically overdetermined by unconscious psychological processes.

Freud regarded the extreme helplessness of the human infant at birth, and the consequent dependence on others for an extended period, as crucial for any understanding of human psychology. The human psyche compensates for such powerlessness by resorting to hallucination and fantasy as a source of satisfaction and defends itself against anxiety through several defense-

mechanisms, such as regression, repression, reaction formation, splitting, projection, introjection, and in a more creative vein, sublimation. The psyche also achieves a degree of organization and integration of the ego, through processes of identification. As Laplanche and Pontalis (1973, 206) put it in *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, “In Freud’s work the concept of identification comes little by little to have the central importance that makes it, not simply one psychical mechanism among others, but the operation itself whereby the human subject is constituted.” The instincts or drives, which Freud understands as the psychical registration or representative of somatic processes, continually seek realization, even if in compromised form. The libidinal or sexual drive is highly adaptable regarding both its object and its aim. Caught between the demands of the drives, the censorship and aggressivity of the super-ego, and the hazards and complexities of the natural and social world, the human being is confronted by the need to accomplish the difficult task of becoming self-civilizing, self-organizing, self-policing, and self-governing. Freud, then, presents an account of the psychic life of power and authority that supplements political philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau by providing an account of the internalization of the social compact. Political and social order relies not only on force or reason but also, and crucially, on the internalization of a social demand through processes of identification. However, this civilizing process is resented even as it is assented to, thereby generating discontents that contain a disruptive capacity.

Ideology and Political order

Erich Fromm

In an early and highly influential adoption of psychoanalysis for political thought, Erich Fromm proposed that Marxism and psychoanalysis could, together, provide a powerful explanation of the reproduction of the established form of social relations and of how social forces mark themselves on individuals and thereby orient those individuals to take satisfaction from the ideologies that operate to stabilize the social order. Drawing especially on Freud’s theory of the sexual or libidinal drive as

extremely malleable and, hence, capable of satisfaction in a multiplicity of ways, Fromm proposed “ideology” as a linking concept that successfully joined Karl Marx’s materialism of the productive forces with Freud’s materialism of the bodily drives. Within the crucible of the family a socializing process is performed that produces, along with individual variation, a common and shared subjective orientation to the established social order. In “The Method and Function of an Analytic Social Psychology” Fromm (1978, 491) termed this orientation the “libidinal structure of a society” and later termed it “social character.” He argued that the task of a (psycho)analytic social psychology “is to explain the shared, socially relevant, psychic attitudes and ideologies—and their unconscious roots in particular—in terms of the influence of economic conditions on libido strivings” (1978, 486).

Ideologies are regarded as shared fantasies that satisfy sexual desires, as a result of the extreme adaptability of the libidinal drives. For instance, authoritarian or fascist ideologies can satisfy sado-masochistic desires. This match between ideology and the socially typical libidinal structure explains the difficulty of achieving social transformation. Citizens or subjects not only believe in an ideology, even if this belief can be characterized as false-consciousness, but they also gain substitute gratification or enjoyment from the way in which the dominant ideology unconsciously satisfies their erotic desires. Hence, the “libidinal structure of a society” operates as a “cement” that binds and holds the specific social form in place by contributing “to the production of important social ideologies in every cultural sphere” (1978, 493). However, just like Freud’s account of the potentially disruptive discontents that civilization generates in its wake, when contradictions and conflicts disrupt the stability of the society, “libidinal energies are freed for new uses.” Having once been “cement,” they are transformed into “dynamite” (1978, 495).

Theodor Adorno

In Chapter VII of *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1955), Freud argues that “identification is the original form of emotional tie with an object” and that this way of integrating outer and inner worlds persists throughout life. Identification, understood as the internalization of aspects

of an external object—be that a person, a social institution, a cultural form, or a leading idea or ideology—establishes a relation to another by also organizing or reorganizing the subject himself or herself in accord with some aspect or quality of the other. In a group or institutional setting, a group or mass psychology can arise in which new identifications reorganize individual psyches in parallel with the psyches of other group members and in relation to a shared object, be that a leader or leading idea or ideology. As Freud puts it in Chapter VIII, “A primary group of this kind is a number of individuals who have put one and the same object in the place of their ego ideal and have consequently identified themselves with one another in their ego.”

Theodor Adorno, soon after the publication of *The Authoritarian Personality* (1991), for which he was one of several authors, published an essay titled “Freudian theory and the pattern of fascist propaganda,” which takes Freud’s *Group Psychology* as its primary reference. If Fromm takes the libido as the drive that mediates between the “the economic base and the formation of ideologies,” Adorno, writing almost 20 years after Fromm, takes identification and its potential, typically regressive, reorganization in the contemporary moment as his corresponding major psychoanalytic concept. He says of Freud that in 1922 in *Group Psychology*, “long before the danger of German fascism appeared to be acute,” Freud’s sensitivity was such that, “though he was hardly interested in the political phase of the problem, [he] clearly foresaw the rise and nature of fascist mass movements in purely psychological categories” (1991, 115). For Adorno, an ideology such as fascism achieves predominance by exploiting human psychology on behalf of the interests of a dominant class. “Psychological dispositions do not actually cause fascism; rather, fascism defines a psychological area which can be successfully exploited by the forces which promote it for entirely non-psychological reasons of self-interest” (1991, 130). These self-interested reasons concern the maintenance of a political order that distributes wealth and opportunity unevenly, typically along class lines.

Jürgen Habermas

Jürgen Habermas also relies on the concept of ideology to develop an account of political and social order and the resilience of established social

relations in which inequality prevails. In the three concluding chapters of *Knowledge and Human Interests* (1971), Habermas takes Freud's account of the dream and the symptom as distorted, intrapsychic communication as a model to also analyze how ideologies and institutions operate to both establish order and constrain freedom. As he argues:

In contrast (to Marx), Freud has acquired in metapsychology a framework for distorted communicative action that allows the conceptualization of the origins of institutions and the role and function of illusions, that is of power and ideology. Freud's theory can represent a structure that Marx did not fathom (1971, 281–82).

In this account, institutions have exchanged “acute external force for the permanent internal compulsion of distorted and self-limiting communication,” and cultural tradition is understood as a “collective unconscious” that is censored and turned outward (1971, 282). Psychoanalysis, as a theory of both psychopathological symptoms and their potential undoing, provides a model of how ideologies both constrain and organize intersubjective relations and of how these very distortions in communication may be displaced in a piecemeal fashion and the emancipatory potential of social ideals realized. Through a different interpretation of psychoanalysis, Habermas produces a more sophisticated account of what Fromm had characterized as the cement that holds together and the dynamite that blows apart the established social and political order.

Louis Althusser

In his essay “Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatuses” (1971), Louis Althusser explains how ideology plays a central role in the reproduction of a political and social order. Althusser follows Karl Marx in focusing on the reproduction of the conditions of production, namely, the forces and relations of production. Significantly, the human subject, as labor power, is included within the forces of production, and ideology operates at this level as well as at the level of the relations of production. As Althusser puts it:

The reproduction of labour-power requires not only a reproduction of its skills, but also, at the same time, a reproduction of its submission to the rules of the established order, i.e. a reproduction of submission to the ruling ideology for the workers, and a reproduction of the ability to manipulate the ruling ideology correctly for the agents of exploitation and repression, so that they, too, will provide for the domination of the ruling class “in words” (1971, 132–33).

He continues a little later: “But this is to recognize the effective presence of a new reality: *ideology*” (1971, 133).

The various ideological state apparatuses, such as the family, the school, the church, the media, and the like, are the institutions through which ideology works this effect of “interpellating” or constructing human subjects with the appropriate attitude to power and authority: an attitude embedded in a set of practices that reproduce the social order. This necessary subjection to ideology is accompanied by misrecognition, such that human subjects regard themselves as “free.” As Althusser concludes, “[T]he individual is interpellated as a (free) subject . . . in order that he shall (freely) accept his subjection . . . ‘all by himself’” (1971, 182). The psychoanalytic theory of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan are drawn on by Althusser in order to conceptualize how ideology both interpellates subjects and produces a necessary misrecognition in which those subjects presume themselves to be free. Lacan’s “imaginary,” as a field of identifications involving misrecognition, is used by Althusser to explicate his theory of ideology and the political order it secures. “Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence” (1971, 162). Consequently, ideology both interpellates or constitutes subjects and leads them to misrecognize the very process of social reproduction that has determined their identity.

Slavoj Žižek

Slavoj Žižek is also concerned with how social order is maintained, even in an age of cynicism in which trust in politicians and political systems has corroded dramatically. Like Fromm, although this similarity usually goes

unrecognized, for Žižek ideology supports enjoyment, which in turn drives practices that reproduce the social order by accepting globalizing capitalism as a kind of second nature beyond transformation. A fascination with identity politics deflects a politics of class conflict. Drawing on Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic theory, Žižek regards social antagonism as the "real" that threatens the established order and that needs to be covered over by the specter of ideology. As gaps and holes recur in the Lacanian symbolic order, ideologies cover over these gaps and seemingly suture the symbolic order back together. Ideologies raise the object of identification to a sublime position and, thereby, support both an idealization (of the nation, for instance) and a perverse enjoyment of the underside of such identifications with the nation, the ethnicity, the civilization, or the like. In this way the social ordering of capitalism survives unchallenged.

Conclusion

As the authors discussed above illustrate, political thought has been attracted to psychoanalysis by its emphasis on the significance of unconscious processes that can be exploited by ideologies and the interests they represent. In her discussion of "the psychic life of power," Judith Butler recognizes how human helplessness at birth and human vulnerability throughout life are fundamental to the ordering of human subjectivity by society, its representatives, and its ideologies. However, where Althusser presumes an irresistible ideological power to interpellate or summon subjects effectively and efficiently, and thereby settle identity, Butler presumes an ambivalent relation of the human subject to the institutions that declare his or her identity. Human subjects reiterate their subjectivity with ambivalence toward the institutions that declare and support their identities—hence, sometimes, they can do more than merely reproduce the conditions of subjection—they can alter them.

This concern with how ideologies and subjectivities can be changed, despite the powerful anchoring effects of established ideologies and the political identities they organize, is explored by Cynthia Burack in her research on psychoanalytic political theory and black feminist thought. Burack draws on Melanie Klein's distinction between the paranoid-schizoid position and the depressive position, regarded as two distinct modes of psychic

functioning, to analyze the differences between political ideologies and discourses that construct a political world of friends and enemies and those alternative ideological formations that construct the political world in a more complex manner. In the world of friend and enemy, Klein's paranoid-schizoid psychic defenses of splitting and projection are discursively available and promote conflict. In the alternative ideological formations that draw on Klein's depressive position, capacities to live with and accept complexity, difference, and ambivalence are discursively available and promote negotiation and, when warranted, reconciliation.

Psychoanalytic theory regards intra-psychic conflict as a constitutive feature of human subjectivity, and psychoanalytic practice typically concerns itself with severe and disabling instances of such intra-psychic conflict and the symptoms they generate. However, psychoanalysis is at the same time a theory of psychic reconciliation and of the capacity to learn from experience, rather than repeating self-destructive routines. It is a theory and practice of working through in which the work of mourning and the capacity for containing rather than splitting ambivalence figure prominently. This dual aspect renders psychoanalysis a powerful theory of human subjectivity and, as illustrated above, a strong contender for incorporation into analyses of political relations in which issues of political order, political change, conflict, and reconciliation figure large.

John D. Cash

See also [Althusser, Louis](#); [Authority](#); [Civil Society](#); [Fascism](#); [Feminism](#); Freud, Sigmund; [Freud and Social Theory](#); [Habermas, Jürgen](#); [Human Nature, Theories of](#); [Ideology](#); [Liberalism](#); [Marx, Karl](#); Methodology and Political Thought; [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Obedience, Political](#); [Totalitarianism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Punishment

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Punishment

Punishment is usually defined as the imposition of loss or suffering on an individual in response to wrongdoing, based on reasons, and derived from an authoritative source, usually the state, and administered through a system with due process rights for the accused. For a punishment to be legitimate, it must be justified, that is, based on coherent reasons and with clear aims, which may be utilitarian or retributivist. For utilitarian theorists, such as Jeremy Bentham, punishment should not be imposed unless the benefits to society outweigh the costs, for example, by deterring the offender and the general public from committing crimes, rehabilitating the offender so that the offender can contribute to society, or incapacitating the offender to protect the public. This approach has been a major weapon in prison reform. Retributivism, or desert theory, focuses on punishing the individual on the basis of what is deserved and appropriate to the crime, so the severity of the punishment should reflect the gravity of the crime but punishment should not be degrading. Modern retributivists such as Andrew von Hirsch emphasize punishment as censure or public denunciation. Both approaches have been criticized on ethical, theoretical, and pragmatic grounds, but both survive in modern sentencing and penal systems.

The historical development of punishment in Western democratic societies has seen a move away from capital punishment and physical punishment toward imprisonment as the major mode of punishment. The United Nations is committed to abolition of the death penalty. Torture is defined by the United Nations Convention against Torture as an act that causes severe

pain and mental or physical suffering, imposed by a person acting in an official capacity, as a means of punishment or to obtain information. Although the use of torture in the criminal justice system is prohibited under Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, vigilance is still needed to prevent states from using such methods, which remain relatively widespread.

Imprisonment is one of the oldest modes of punishment, although modern prisons in the United Kingdom and the United States may bear little resemblance to their eighteenth-century counterparts. The use of imprisonment has expanded dramatically since the early 1990s in both societies, reflecting increased punitiveness, efforts to combat drug crime, and longer sentences. This has led to problems of overcrowding and to criticism of prisons for simply “warehousing” offenders. This expansion has also increased the financial burdens of imprisonment. Alternatives to imprisonment for specific groups, such as female prisoners, are being considered.

A key principle underpinning imprisonment and formulated by Bentham is the principle of less eligibility, which demands that conditions in prison should be harsher than those of the lowest paid individuals in the wider society. However, increasingly this principle has been tempered by the development of rights for prisoners and the subjection of punishment systems to external regulation and scrutiny, for example, the United Nations Committee against Torture and the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Penal systems are assessed for their compliance with Rights Conventions, including the European Convention on Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Rules governing the treatment of prisoners have also been formulated by the United Nations in its Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners and by the Council of Europe in the European Prison Rules.

The treatment of prisoners has been challenged under Article 3 of the European Convention, the right not to be subject to inhuman and degrading treatment, and under Article 8, the right to private and family life. In the United States, constitutional challenges to prison conditions have been

mounted under the Eighth Amendment, which prohibits cruel and unusual punishment. Recent improvements in prison conditions reflect the view that the loss of liberty is sufficient punishment, and within the constraints of imprisonment, prisoners should lead as normal lives as possible. However, in response to the growth of prisoners' rights litigation, new legislation has been enacted in the United States to limit prisoners' rights to bring such claims. Although the United States still employs capital punishment, it has been abolished in the European Union and is opposed by the United Nations. Belarus is the only European nation that allows the death penalty.

Susan Easton

See also [Bentham, Jeremy](#); [International Law](#); [Justice](#); [Obedience, Political](#); [Power](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Terrorism](#)

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Qutb, Sayyid

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Qutb, Sayyid

A prominent figure in the modernization of Islamic political thought in the twentieth century, Sayyid Qutb (1906–66) was an Egyptian intellectual as well as a writer, poet, literary critic, and leading member of the Muslim Brotherhood during the 1950s and 1960s. His writings developed an account of political theory based on the ultimate sovereignty of God and Islamic law. His magnum opus was a 30-volume commentary on Qur'anic concepts titled *In the Shade of the Qur'an* (1953). Some of his major contributions to Islamic political thought include *Social Justice in Islam* (1949), *The Battle between Islam and Capitalism* (1951), *Islam and Universal Peace* (1951), *Islamic Studies* (1953), *The Characteristics and Values of Islamic Conduct* (1960), *This Religion* (1962), *The Future Religion* (1962), and *Milestones* (1964).

Qutb was born into a family of rural notables with nationalist leanings during a time of increasing resistance against British colonialism in Egypt. After receiving a secular primary and secondary education, he attended Dar al-'Ulum, a modern teacher training college in Cairo. He graduated in 1933 and worked in different capacities for the Ministry of Education until the early 1950s. During this time, he was also a prolific writer, producing mainly works of literary criticism. In 1948, he went to the United States to study the American education system. Qutb was deeply troubled by what he saw as a culture of sexual promiscuity, worship of material possessions, violence, racial discrimination, and an absence of moral values. Shortly after returning to Cairo in 1950, he joined the Muslim Brotherhood. He

supported the 1952 coup d'état led by Gamal Abdel Nasser and a group of nationalist army officers known as the Free Officers Movement against the British-backed monarchy. Gradually, however, Qutb came to regard the new regime as being un-Islamic. After a failed 1954 assassination attempt against Nasser, the Muslim Brotherhood was dissolved and many of its members were arrested. Qutb was sentenced to 15 years in prison, where he reportedly endured severe torture. In prison, his writings took a more radical Islamist turn. In 1964, he was released at the personal request of Iraqi President Abdul Salam Arif but rearrested within a few months and charged with conspiracy against the state. Qutb was sentenced to death by a military tribunal and executed in August 1966. The prosecution's case against Qutb was based primarily on his later writings, particularly in *Milestones*. Although Islamic themes and concepts appeared in Qutb's works beginning in the mid-1920s, it was not until the early 1950s that he sought to develop a theory of total Islamic rupture with the established political order. In these works, Qutb described the prevailing condition in Muslim societies and around the world as a state of *Jahiliyya* (barbarism or ignorance). The term is a Qur'anic concept used to describe the condition of pre-Islamic Arabia and is understood generally to mean the antithesis of Islam. In Qutb's political thought, Jahiliyya came to represent the idea of sovereignty of the individual and the rejection of divine authority. Increasingly, Qutb came to see the postcolonial Egyptian state as an instrument for preserving the sovereignty of Nasser's totalitarian rule. Calling for a new direction, Qutb presented a political account of the ultimate sovereignty of God based on the Islamic principles of justice and morality and the concept of "the great unity" between the creator and the universe. Although his early Islamist works suggested that divine sovereignty in the form of an Islamic state would materialize organically once people are educated in Islamic ways of life, Qutb's later writings increasingly emphasized the necessity of action and the role of a devoted Muslim vanguard whose task included developing social programs on the basis of the Shari'a. His last work, *Milestones*, called on the vanguard to eliminate the reign of man and to establish the kingdom of God on Earth.

Qutb's turn to Islamist political thought was in part a result of the influence of such figures as Pakistani theologian Abul Ala Maududi, Indian Muslim intellectual Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, and Egyptian Islamist Hassan al-Banna.

Like the contributions of many other pioneers of modern Islamic thought, Qutb's writings are said to have had a declericalization effect, challenging traditional religiosity and calling for free and intuitive engagement with core Islamic concepts. Rejecting Qutb's political account of Islam and his designation of the Egyptian society as a state of Jahiliyya, traditionalist clergy advocated obedience to the Muslim sovereign. Despite government censorship and opposition from the clerical establishment, Qutb's writings enjoyed wide readership both during and after his life. *Milestones*, which was described by the Sheikh of al-Azhar as blasphemy, became a manifesto for many Islamists during the 1970s and 1980s. Although some commentators on his thought maintain that Qutb did not make an explicit call for physical violence, more radical Islamist groups like the Egyptian Jama'at al-Muslimin and Al-Qaeda have sought to put into practice Qutbist concepts through violent measures including murder of political opponents and attacks on civilians.

Siavash Saffari

See also [Islamic Political Thought](#); [Modernization](#); [Progress](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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R

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Race and Racism

Race and racism

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Race and Racism

Few political concepts are as fraught with difficulty as race and racism. Although race is now discredited as a biological category, and racism is the subject of widespread moral condemnation, racial categorization remains so much a part of everyday life and speech—we describe ourselves and others as “black” or “white” or as “Asian” or “Latino”—that it is difficult to imagine a world without race. The result is a complex and confusing landscape. And this before account is taken of persistent racial inequalities, discrimination, and prejudice. To understand how we have arrived on this complicated terrain, this article briefly discusses the concepts of race and racism. It then outlines the historical development of racial ideas from the eighteenth to the twentieth century, before reviewing some competing theories that have sought to explain racial categorization. The final sections discuss contemporary racial dilemmas in both theory and practice.

Defining Terms

The concept of race refers to the grouping of individual human beings according to observed physical characteristics such as skin color, face shape, or body morphology, which are believed to be naturally or genetically determined. The physical characteristics, or phenotypes, that are deemed relevant for racial classification have varied from one social context to another, although skin color has played an especially important role in the history of Europe and the Americas (but not with many

indigenous peoples such as the Lakota, whose word for white people, *washichus*, has nothing to do with skin color). Thus identified, racial groups are attributed typical behaviors, intellectual capacities, and emotional and moral dispositions, which are often viewed as fixed, bio-behavioral essences. Racial theories view races as discrete groups with determinate boundaries, which allow a person to be assigned to this or that race. Both ink and blood have been spilled in the effort to define racial groups, with sometimes absurd results. As discussed below, although it is now widely discredited, historically the identification of distinct human races has preoccupied scientists, anthropologists, philosophers, and historians. Indeed, until quite recently race was assumed to be a natural category.

Racism can be defined as the evaluation or differential treatment of racial groups on the basis of their alleged “natural” differences. For some commentators the very act of identifying racial groups is a form of racism. There is something to be said for this view, partly on the grounds that most race theorists have gone on to make evaluations or rankings of races. However, unless evaluation and/or differential treatment are included as necessary criteria for racism, many acts would have to be labeled racist in a way that blurs important distinctions between the descriptive, everyday use of common racial terms and the evaluative attitudes, behaviors, and practices that treat some racial groups as inferior to others. Since many people identify themselves and others in racial terms (e.g., “I am black” and “she is white”), but do so with no intent to either praise or denigrate, the present article follows the practice of defining racism as classificatory *and* evaluative.

Racism takes many different forms. It can involve prejudicial attitudes or beliefs, discriminatory behaviors, demeaning uses of speech, and physical violence. Thus, a brief inventory of racist acts could include a belief in the innate superiority of the “Aryan race”; an employer who prefers to hire workers from a particular racial group; a cartoon that depicts a stereotypical Jew; speech that denigrates or expresses hatred toward a particular racial group; and physical attacks on immigrants or minorities. This indicative list serves to illustrate the diversity of racist attitudes and behaviors and, hence, the complex range of moral, political, and legal issues that racism raises. Several authors have proposed typologies to make sense of this diversity.

For example, Erik Bleich (in his *Race Politics in Britain and France*, 2005) disaggregates racism into three main types: access racism (e.g., discrimination in jobs and services), expressive racism (e.g., racial hate speech), and physical racism (e.g., racially motivated violence). It is also important to note that racism is not solely a property of individual human agents. Institutions, policies, and social structures may also be defined as racist if they advantage or disadvantage different racial groups. Some examples are discussed in the following sections.

The Origins of Racial Thought

Making distinctions between groups is as old as human history. In Ancient Greece, for example, Aristotle famously distinguished between civilized people and barbarians. Although these processes of classification and denigration bear some similarities to racism, they were not based on hereditary or phenotypical differences. Scholars now agree that racism is a more modern phenomenon. Although it is impossible to date the origins of racial thought precisely, it is generally thought that European anti-Semitism during the late medieval and early modern period laid its foundations, but fully fledged racial theorizing began to flourish only in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Some of the earliest racial theorizing came from European travelers. In 1684, François Bernier was one of the first writers to use the term “race” to refer to discrete groups of human beings based on phenotypical differences. His book *A New Division of the Earth* identified “four or five species of races of men.” Subsequent writers who developed influential racial theories included Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, Barthold Georg Niebuhr, and Arthur de Gobineau.

Two defining features of modernity shaped racial thought during the eighteenth century: first, science and the Enlightenment; and second, colonization and the slave trade. The impulse toward racial categorization was shaped by wider trends in scientific thought, notably early biologists’ efforts to catalogue and classify the natural world. Hence, racial theories were not born of a premodern, atavistic urge but emerged at precisely the time when the scientific foundations of modern societies were being built.

Nor was this association of race and science a passing fad: The same unholy alliance returned in the late nineteenth century in the form of Social Darwinism and the eugenics movement (see below). One controversy surrounding the early attempts to classify distinct races was that they appeared to conflict with the Biblical creation story. Supporters of monogenesis argued that all humans shared a common ancestor, a position consistent with descent from Adam, while advocates of polygenesis argued that the different human races had separate origins and were in fact distinct species.

In addition to this intellectual context, racial thought was also shaped by the political and economic interests of European powers. As these countries colonized Africa, Asia, and the Americas, ideas about racial difference and superiority furnished a language to explain and legitimize European dominion. These discourses took many forms—an important distinction was between those that depicted non-Europeans as irredeemable “savages” and those that characterized them as “backward races” who could, with the correct tutelage, progress toward a civilized state. Both served to justify exploitative and demeaning practices. Nowhere were these more obvious than in the transatlantic slave trade, which flourished during the eighteenth century.

However, as the links to scientific debates indicate, racial theorizing was not developed for purely instrumental reasons, nor was it restricted to dedicated race theorists, slave traders, or colonial administrators. On the contrary, assumptions about racial categories were deep-seated and widespread, and debates about race captured the imagination of many writers and leading philosophers, including Voltaire, David Hume, and Immanuel Kant. If these and other writers came to very different conclusions about the origins and significance of racial categories, what was widely shared was the view that such categories were a natural, even self-evident, phenomenon. During the nineteenth century, racial ideas played an important role in philosophies of history developed by first-rate thinkers such as Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and lesser minds such as Joseph Arthur Comte de Gobineau. Again, there were substantial variations, but a common thread was to attribute an important role to race in explaining the rise and fall of nations and civilizations.

Race Ascendant

In his 1903 book, *The Souls of Black Folk*, the influential African American intellectual W. E. B. Du Bois famously claimed that the problem of the twentieth century was the problem of the color line. Subsequent events would bear out his contention. In the United States, although slavery had been abolished after the Civil War, racial segregation persisted in the form of Jim Crow laws, and in 1896, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of racial segregation with the notorious doctrine of “separate but equal.” The early twentieth century was also the peak of European empires and therefore of the rule of white Europeans over African and Asian peoples.

During this time, a new form of scientific racism, with concrete policy implications, was gaining ground. It began with the fusing of a novel scientific approach, Darwinism, with racial theory. In the late nineteenth century, Darwin’s theories of natural selection had been taken up by a number of his followers, who argued that human beings could create an evolutionary improvement in the species by actively intervening in sexual reproduction. In 1883, Darwin’s half-cousin Francis Galton coined the term “eugenics” to describe this approach. Galton, and eugenicists after him, advocated selective breeding to improve the “fitness” of the human species: “Positive eugenics” would require that the “fittest” be encouraged or forced to reproduce, while “negative eugenics” would discourage or force the “unfit” not to reproduce, by sterilization if necessary. Eugenics received support from prominent intellectuals and politicians across the political spectrum. In the United States, eugenic arguments played an important role in the construction of the “national origins” quota system that shaped immigration flows until the 1960s, and compulsory sterilization of “imbeciles or the feeble-minded” was implemented in a number of states. In 1927, the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of sterilization by a majority of eight to one in the infamous *Buck v. Bell* case. Sterilization policies were implemented in several other countries, including Japan and Sweden.

It was in Germany that the most virulent, and racialized, form of eugenics developed. Influenced by the ideas of the Anglo-German writer Houston

Stewart Chamberlain, who argued for the supremacy of an “Aryan race,” the Nazis developed eugenics policies with the aim of maintaining a “pure” German race. This approach began with sterilization of those who were deemed physically and mentally unfit and proceeded to the murder of thousands of disabled people in compulsory “euthanasia” programs during the 1930s. At the same time, Jews were being persecuted and stigmatized as enemies of the Third Reich. The Nuremberg Laws of 1935 defined Germans and Jews based on their descent or “blood,” stripped the latter of their citizenship, and outlawed marriage or intercourse between “Jews” and “Germans.” These laws were justified with reference to racial theories about Aryan supremacy. Anti-Semitism and persecution grew during the later 1930s; from 1940, Jews were forced into ghettos; and from 1942, they were deported to extermination camps. Some six million Jews, as well as hundreds of thousands of Romani, were murdered. Many of the killing techniques used in the camps had been developed in the earlier eugenic programs.

Race in Retreat

World War II was a watershed in the history of racial thought. The defeat of Nazism and revelations about the extermination camps catalyzed a shift in global opinion. Writers such as Franz Boas and Ashley Montagu began to challenge the biological bases of racial categorization and found a receptive audience. In 1949, the recently established United Nations (UN) gathered eminent academics in Paris to discuss the concept of race. The following year, the UN Statement of Race asserted that there was just one human species, *Homo sapiens*, and that race had been falsely used to describe a range of national, cultural, and religious groups. It further recommended that the term be dropped and replaced with “ethnic groups.” The statement was not uncontroversial, but it represented a major epistemic shift: In a remarkably short period of time, the naturalistic understanding of race was replaced by a new consensus that racial categories were social constructs, not biological essences.

At the same time as race was losing its scientific credibility, racially structured forms of rule were coming under increased strain. The struggle for independence in colonized countries picked up momentum, and it

became increasingly difficult for the Allied powers, which had fought a war for self-determination against a racist state, to deny the claims of self-government by nonwhite peoples. By the 1970s, the major European empires had been largely dismantled.

Decolonization and the discrediting of racial theories did not mean that political racism had disappeared. On the contrary, the second half of the twentieth century witnessed two iconic struggles for racial equality: the U.S. Civil Rights Movement and the campaign against apartheid in South Africa. The U.S. Civil Rights Movement developed to challenge racial injustice, including segregation, disenfranchisement, and violence, in the Southern states. Segregation persisted despite the overturning of the “separate but equal” doctrine in the 1954 Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education*. A grassroots movement led by prominent African Americans, including Martin Luther King Jr., staged sit-ins, bus boycotts, and other forms of nonviolent protest in a campaign of civil disobedience that eventually bore fruit with the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Racial injustice was not eradicated by the Civil Rights Movement, but some of the most glaring wrongs were, finally, addressed.

South Africa swam very much against the tide during the postwar period. The apartheid regime of racial segregation was officially created by the white National Party government in 1948 and actually intensified over the following decades. In the face of internal resistance led by the African National Congress and growing international condemnation, the South African government attempted to reform apartheid during the 1980s, but it was only in the 1990s that this most egregious form of racial rule was overturned and multiracial democratic elections were held for the first time, in 1994.

Explaining Racial Categorization and Racism

If biological explanations of race have been discredited, how should the existence of racial categorizations and racism be explained? Contemporary theories of race and racism are, unsurprisingly, informed by wider understandings of society. Within social science, theories based on Marxist, Weberian, rational-choice, poststructuralist, psychoanalytical, and neo-

Gramscian frameworks have been developed. It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss all of these in depth, but a brief summary of some especially influential theories follows.

A large amount of the debate on race has occurred among Marxist or neo-Marxist writers. Marxist explanations range from economically reductionist and deterministic accounts of the relationship between race and class to more sophisticated approaches that shade into the other traditions discussed below. At one end of the spectrum race is viewed as an ideological construct that obscures class relations and prevents the formation of class consciousness. Intraclass divisions based on racial identities prevent the identification of common interests between, for example, black and white workers, and the promotion of racial categories therefore serves the interests of ruling classes by dividing workers into racialized groups. Less instrumental Marxist accounts have also emphasized the role of race in the reproduction of capitalism but have not assumed a simple determination of race in terms of class relations. Sociologists such as Paul Gilroy and Stuart Hall analyzed the processes by which race was constructed as a social and political category. For these writers, racially structured social formations were not simply determined by class. What all Marxist approaches share, however, is an analysis of the relationships between racism and the capitalist mode of production, whether in the context of plantation slavery, colonialism, or more recently, migration and multicultural societies.

One of the most influential recent analyses of racial categorization and racism is the “racial formation” approach developed by Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1994). Their theory aims to steer between the discredited view of race as “essence,” as something natural or fixed, and the equally problematic idea of race as “mere illusion,” as found in some cruder Marxist accounts. Omi and Winant argue that race cannot be subsumed under some other social category (such as class) but must be analyzed as the outcome of political contestation over racial meanings, which occurs at the levels of both collective political action and personal practice. Racial formation is “the process by which social, economic and political forces determine the content and importance of racial categories, and by which they are in turn shaped by racial meanings” (p. 61). Race is thus theorized

as a complex of social meanings that is undergoing constant transformation through political struggle.

A second set of theories about race and racism can be found in the psychological literature. These theories differ from the social-science approaches outlined above in that they generally locate the impulse toward racial categorization and even racism within human cognitive processes. Psychological approaches can be subdivided into four groups: socialization, perceptual saliency, group prejudice, and evolutionary theories. Socialization theories argue that children either are explicitly taught to make racial distinctions—by parents, teachers, and peers—or pick them up from the social environment without anyone explicitly teaching them. Theories based on perceptual saliency view racial thinking as a special case of a more general tendency of human beings to classify objects into groups according to their perceptually salient features. Color, it is argued, is a salient visual property, and thus, skin color triggers a general categorizing impulse that is central to our cognitive systems. Group-prejudice theories also see racial categorization as a special case of a general tendency, but this time that tendency is toward the formation of group prejudices, whether those groups are based on sex, class, or national identity. According to these approaches, human beings' cognitive systems are predisposed to form stereotypes about social groups, and the impulse to racial thinking is just one example of this phenomenon. Lastly, evolutionary psychologists argue that the tendency to classify people racially results from a species-wide cognitive system that evolved early in human history. They hypothesize that a module of our cognitive systems that allows us to navigate the social world, and which probably evolved for purposes quite unrelated to racial categorization, predisposes us to make racial distinctions.

Beyond Race?

The question of how to explain racial thinking underlies an important contemporary debate about the use of racial categorizations. We have seen that the biological basis of race has been widely rejected and that a consensus exists about its socially constructed nature, even though there is disagreement about how and why it is constructed. This consensus has given rise to disagreement about whether racial categorizations should be

used at all, especially by social and political theorists. If racial categories are social constructions, with close ties to oppression and subjugation, should theorists persist in using them or seek to purge social and political discourse of any reference to race? Ron Mallon (2006) has neatly characterized this dispute as a debate between “eliminativists” and “conservationists.” Eliminativists such as Kwame Anthony Appiah and Amy Gutmann (1996) or Naomi Zack (2002) argue that since races do not exist, we should desist from “race talk”—making racial distinctions, using racialized terms, and so on. They aim for a world without race. Conservationists such as Lucius Outlaw, on the other hand, argue that even though racial categories are socially constructed, they do and should form the basis of social identities, and therefore, race talk must persist. Rather than a world without race, they aim for a world without racism.

It is worth pointing out that any resolution of this debate turns not only on ethics but also on the facts of the matter. Although this issue is typically discussed as a normative question (*should* we overcome racial categorizations?), a prior feasibility question (can we overcome racial categorizations?) is fundamental. There is no point in wishing for an end to racial categorization if it is hardwired into us. Hence, the explanatory theories outlined above acquire normative significance: Those who explain race as an illusion functionally related to oppression will likely view race as something that not only can but also should be overcome; those who see racial categorizations as an unavoidable part of our social world, or moreover think that they are grounded in human psychology, may well want to eliminate racism but will likely be skeptical about the possibility of overcoming racial categorization.

Race-Making and the Politics of Antiracism

The preceding debate, conducted mostly by race theorists, has a practical corollary in the politics of antiracism. This can be understood as a dilemma between nonracialism and race consciousness. States that espouse a normative commitment to antiracism yet continue to be characterized by racially structured sociopolitical orders—including most democratic societies—must steer a course between the denial and the reproduction of race. The very policies and institutions designed to tackle racism have a

tendency to reproduce existing, and even produce new, racial categories. Census questions, antidiscrimination legislation, racial monitoring, and affirmative-action programs all rest on racial classifications. Thus, the antiracist dilemma, a refusal to recognize race, may help delegitimize it as a social category but at the cost of denying the reality of race-based disadvantage, whereas race-based legislation intended to address racial disadvantage risks reproducing the very categories that it seeks to overcome. Put bluntly, does antiracism require the recognition and institutionalization of racial categories, or does this approach merely reproduce the very distinctions that antiracism seeks to overcome?

The policy implications can be clearly seen by a brief comparison of three democratic countries with very different approaches to antiracism: France, the United Kingdom, and the United States. In France, race is not viewed as a valid category for public discourse, nor is it embedded in state institutions or legislation. Recently, a heated debate has taken place about whether racial or ethnic statistics should be collected, a policy that would require the introduction of racial categories into public-policy discourse. In the United Kingdom, by contrast, race has long been a common term in public-policy debates. Starting in the 1960s, U.K. governments passed “race relations” legislation, and since 2000, public authorities have had a statutory duty to promote “race equality,” a phrase that is anathema to the French approach. Since the 1960s, the United States has been even more race conscious in its approach to racial inequalities. For example, affirmative-action policies have been upheld by the Supreme Court so long as they are “narrowly tailored.” The important 2003 *Grutter v. Bollinger* decision, which ruled on the University of Michigan Law School’s affirmative-action admissions policy, argued that “diversity is a compelling state interest that can justify the use of race in university admissions”—but only as one of many factors (the university’s quantitatively preferential undergraduate admissions program was ruled unconstitutional). In sum, these three countries’ approach to antiracism policies could be arrayed along a spectrum with the French nonracist approach at one end, the U.S. race-conscious approach at the other, and the United Kingdom in between, but closer to the latter. The controversies surrounding the normative justification and practical impact of these three divergent approaches illustrate the contested ground of contemporary racial politics and thought.

James Hampshire

See also [Affirmative Action](#); [Apartheid](#); [Black Power](#); [Class](#); [Darwinism and Social Darwinism](#); [Empire and Political Thought](#); [Ethnicity and Political Thought](#); [Gobineau, Arthur](#); [King, Martin Luther, Jr.](#); [Liberalism](#); [Multiculturalism](#); [National Socialism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Progress](#); [Psychoanalysis and Political Thought](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [United Nations](#); [Theories of the](#)

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Edward Vallance Edward Vallance

Radicalism

Radicalism

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Radicalism

“Radicalism” has not been consistently applied to any specific political program. Instead, it has largely served as a loose descriptor for a range of ideas, factions, personalities, and parties.

The term *radical* was employed in political discourse in Britain before 1750. However, usage in this earlier period tended to reflect its Latin origins: *radix* = root, reflecting a fundamental or inherent quality. So to suggest, as did the politician and writer Nathaniel Bacon in a work published in 1647, that the English constitution was “radical” was to contend that English liberties were based on an original ancient constitution unaltered by foreign invasion or outside influence.

This approach is quite different from the political usage of “radical” as defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary*: “advocating thorough or far-reaching political or social reform.” For that reason, some historians are reticent about applying the terms radical or radicalism to premodern politics. The argument is that there is a danger of presenting individuals and groups as advocating changing the political or social *status quo* when, in fact, many justified their arguments on the basis that they were upholding legal and historical traditions or social norms. Of course, as noted by the historian Robert Zaller, simply because arguments were legitimated by references to the traditional does not mean that the content or consequences of these arguments were not radical in the modern understanding of the term.

A further area of difficulty with this term relates to the notion of a “radical tradition”—that is, a lineage of radical thought that can be traced across historical time periods. This idea has received scholarly articulation in the works of British Marxist historians such as Christopher Hill and E. P. Thompson. However, the most powerful presentations of this idea have come from British left-wing politicians, notably, Tony Benn and the late Fenner Brockway. In these depictions of the radical tradition, seventeenth-century groups such as the English Levellers or Diggers are seen as prototypes of twentieth-century “radicals”—socialists, communists, and so on. The element of anachronism in these portraits is obvious, but many premodern historians remain attached to radical and radicalism as useful labels. Scholars including Glenn Burgess and J. C. Davis have argued that a “functionalist” approach to the term—viewing groups or individuals as radical depending on their place in the spectrum of contemporary political or social thought—allows historians to use the term as a valuable descriptor without investing either in grand narratives of radicalism or in distorting the aims and aspirations of premodern radicals. For historians of the nineteenth century, the term is less problematic given that radical and radicalism had become common political terms. The phrase “radical reformer” was invoked in Britain, both negatively (to denote extremism) and positively (to indicate a staunch supporter of necessary political reform) with increasing frequency in the decades after the Peterloo Massacre of 1819. In the first half of the nineteenth century, radicalism came to be closely associated with popular reform movements, particularly the Chartists, who advocated adult male suffrage, the secret ballot, and annual parliaments.

By the second half of the nineteenth century, however, the meaning of radicalism had shifted in response to changes in both popular and parliamentary politics. As noted by Raymond Williams, “radicalism” became distinctly less “radical” in the present-day understanding of the term. It became attached instead to the reforming wing of the British Liberal party and was often used to differentiate reformers operating within the British liberal/constitutional tradition from those groups, including remnants of the Chartists, who had adopted socialist and/or revolutionary ideas. In a North American context, “radical” also came to be associated with a wing of a mainstream political party. “Radical Republicans” argued for a post–Civil War settlement that gave greater rights to former slaves

while exacting greater retribution against the former Confederacy (including disenfranchising its supporters). Within Congress, the Radical Republicans were also instrumental in pressing for the impeachment of President Andrew Johnson.

By the twentieth century, understandings of “radical” and “radicalism” in both the United Kingdom and the United States had shifted once more to incorporate groups—socialist/communist/revolutionary—that radicalism had once been differentiated from.

In pejorative use, the term came to be applied in a similar fashion to that applied in the 1820s and 1830s as a synonym for extremism or fanaticism. This understanding of the term has considerable currency in twenty-first-century British and American politics, in which “radicals,” “radicalism,” and “radicalization” are frequently connected with Islamic terrorist groups or state socialism. The terminology remains unstable, however, given the coterminous revival, particularly evident in the speeches of former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, of “radical” and “radical reform” as signifying far-reaching structural change, especially to the welfare state.

Edward Vallance

See also [Anarchism](#); [Chartism](#); [Constitutionalism](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Empire and Political Thought](#); [French Revolution](#); [Political Thought of the](#); [Liberty](#); [Theories of](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Paine, Thomas](#); [Revolution](#); [Rights, Civil](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Socialism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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John O. Voll John O. Voll

Ramadan, Tariq

Ramadan, Tariq

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Ramadan, Tariq

Tariq Ramadan is a Swiss-born academic and contemporary European Muslim intellectual who is an advocate of Muslim reform and renewal. In his writings and public presentations, he emphasizes the importance of religion as a force countering the negative aspects of modern secularist ideologies. His broad goal is to provide an articulation of the Islamic message that shows the relevance and importance of Islam in the contemporary modern age. Since this effort involves strong critiques both of many current social and political policies in the West and of old-style and long established Muslim positions and practices, his views are sometimes controversial but influential. He was on the 2004 *Time* list of the most influential people in the world and the *Foreign Policy* lists of the “Top 100 Global Thinkers” in 2009 and 2010.

Ramadan was born in Geneva in 1962. His maternal grandfather was Hasan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, and his father was Said Ramadan, a Brotherhood leader who was forced into exile because of the suppression of the organization in Egypt beginning in the 1950s. His father was active in global Muslim affairs and established the Islamic Center of Geneva, which became an important research and educational institution. Tariq Ramadan completed graduate studies in literature and philosophy and received a doctorate in Islamic Studies from the University of Geneva in 1996. He taught at a number of institutions, including the University of Fribourg and the Collège de Saussure. In 2004, he was invited to become the Luce Professor of Religion at the University

of Notre Dame in the United States. He was unable to assume that professorship because the U.S. Department of State denied him the necessary visa on security grounds. Instead, he accepted a position in St. Antony's College, part of the University of Oxford in the United Kingdom, in 2005.

As a prominent intellectual among the Muslims who are now second- and third-generation Europeans rather than recent immigrants, Ramadan defines the distinctive dimensions of European Muslim life. He argues that a Muslim personality is emerging that is faithful to the timeless principles of Islam but is expressed within the frameworks of European and American cultures. The distinction between particular culture and universal religion is important within Ramadan's broader concept of renewal. In his view, Islam as a universal religion must be relevant in the broad diversity of world cultures and is not tied to one particular culture's mode of manifesting the Islamic faith. He argues that Islam is a religion, not a culture. In this way, it becomes possible to speak of "European Islam" or "American Islam."

A major challenge in developing this vision for Muslims in the West is to develop an understanding of how Islamic legal traditions and jurisprudence can be relevant for Muslims living in societies where the majority of the population is non-Muslim. Ramadan urges Muslims to go beyond minority thinking, moving from concepts of adaptation and assimilation to seeing themselves as part of a pluralist society. An important part of this reconceptualization is a move away from the older Muslim view of the world being divided into *dar al-Islam* (the realm of Islam) and *dar al-harb* (the realm of war where law and the state are non-Islamic). Instead, in the context of globalization, Ramadan proposes that Muslims now live in a "realm of testimony" (*dar al-shahadah*) in which all people bear witness to the principles of their faiths.

Although many people view Ramadan as an important positive voice in the Muslim world, others are strongly critical of his positions. More traditionalist and conservative Muslims object to his reconceptualizations of Islam as being unacceptable innovations. However, the strongest objections have come from more secularist Western intellectuals, such as Paul Berman. They do not disagree so much with his proposed religious reforms, as they

argue that, despite the moderation of his positions when he is addressing Western audiences, he is somehow a supporter of Islamic radicalism and terrorist groups, although he has publicly denounced terrorism on many occasions. They also interpret many of his policy statements to be anti-Semitic and anti-Western in substance.

Both critics and supporters agree that Ramadan is an important voice in the increasingly global networks of action and communication involved in interreligious and intercultural relations in the twenty-first century. In his work, Ramadan tries to present what he calls a “new geography” for comprehensive reinterpretation of Islam for the new local and global contexts in which Muslims live.

John O. Voll

See also [Empire and Political Thought](#); [Ethnicity and Political Thought](#); [Freedom of Expression](#); [Globalization](#); [Islamic Political Thought](#); [Liberalism](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Toleration](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Jennifer Burns Jennifer Burns

Rand, Ayn

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Rand, Ayn

Ayn Rand's (1905–82) philosophy of rational selfishness, limited government, individualism, and moral capitalism, expressed in her bestselling novels *The Fountainhead* (1943) and *Atlas Shrugged* (1957), has been deeply influential on libertarian and conservative thought. Rand's atheism made her a controversial figure among religious conservatives, but many shared her free market views and came to accept her argument that capitalism was a moral system. Although she denounced libertarians for their lack of principles, Rand was a primary inspiration for the 1970s libertarian movement. Her longevity as a popular political philosopher has been remarkable. In 2009, nearly 30 years after her death, *Atlas Shrugged* sold a record-breaking 500,000 copies and she was embraced by the right-leaning Tea Party movement.

Ayn Rand was born in 1905 as Alissa Rosenbaum, the eldest daughter of a prosperous Jewish family in St. Petersburg, Russia. She developed a lifelong hatred of communism when her father's chemistry shop was nationalized during the Bolshevik revolution. In 1926, Rosenbaum immigrated to the United States with the help of relatives, changing her name to Ayn Rand. She sought her fortune first in Hollywood, working briefly as a screenwriter. The influence of Hollywood can be seen in the cinematic quality of her fiction, which is epic in scope and marked by glamorous, stylized heroes and villains.

In 1940, Rand volunteered for Wendell Willkie, the Republican candidate for U.S. president. Always anti-Communist, Rand now began to worry about “collectivism,” a more general term for ideas and policies she thought threatened individual freedom. She threaded these ideas into her bestselling 1943 novel, *The Fountainhead*, the story of an independent architect who refuses to compromise. A coded political parable that attacked the collectivism of the New Deal, *The Fountainhead* earned Rand an important place in the growing conservative movement.

In the following years, Rand worked to formalize her ideas into a system she called objectivism, turning from a former interest in Friedrich Nietzsche to Aristotle. Focusing now on rationality, Rand strove to create a new secular philosophical system that would justify capitalism by promoting the virtue of rational selfishness. Rand argued that unregulated, laissez-faire capitalism is a moral system because it enables the rational individual to reap the full benefits of his or her labor. By contrast, redistribution of wealth through taxes or welfare programs is immoral because it penalizes the productive and rewards the unproductive. Rand argued that a morality of altruism underlay modern society and caused most of the world’s problems.

She expressed these ideas in another bestselling novel, *Atlas Shrugged* (1957), a dystopian narrative of America brought to the brink of ruin by socialist policies. *Atlas Shrugged* emphasized the contribution of uniquely gifted individuals. Rand’s hero, John Galt, convinces business leaders and artists to go “on strike” until their talents are adequately rewarded. In a society ruled by altruism, Rand suggests, there will be no producers left.

Panned by critics, *Atlas Shrugged* was feverishly embraced by a rising generation of conservatives and libertarians. Among her most devoted fans was Alan Greenspan, the future head of the Federal Reserve Board, who was attracted to her free market politics and her clear-cut ideology. Through the New York–based Nathaniel Branden Institute (NBI), Rand and others offered courses in her philosophy. She promoted her political views through a newsletter, several bestselling nonfiction books, and frequent appearances in the media. In 1968, Rand folded NBI and broke with her closest collaborators. Despite Rand’s sudden exit from public life, her ideas

continued to circulate widely among libertarians. A number of her students and admirers went on to careers in politics and political activism, continuing her influence in conservative and libertarian circles.

Rand has been harshly criticized for both her ideas and her actions. After Rand's death, Barbara Branden revealed Rand's liaison with her husband Nathaniel Branden and her use of amphetamines. She and others described a toxic atmosphere of cultlike conformity surrounding the novelist and argued that Rand's personal failings were symptomatic of flaws in objectivist philosophy that led to dogmatism, rigidity, and an overemphasis on rationality at the expense of emotion.

From afar, critics have attacked Rand for lacking kindness or empathy and for promoting the strong over the weak. Even some who agree with her platform of unregulated capitalism and limited government deplore the harshness of her fiction and her rejection of religious values. Philosophers have scorned Rand's objectivism, and literary critics scoff at her novels for their cardboard characters and black-and-white worldview. Yet Rand's celebration of the individual and her critique of government continue to resonate with an ever growing readership.

Jennifer Burns

See also [American Political Thought](#); [Anarchism](#); [Capitalism](#); [Conservatism](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Individualism](#); [Libertarianism](#); [Neoconservatism](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Psychoanalysis and Political Thought](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [Utopianism](#)

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Bart Schultz Bart Schultz

Rawls, John

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Rawls, John

John Rawls (1921–2002) is credited with having revived substantive English-language political philosophy, after its near death at the hands of logical positivism, and with advancing a compelling alternative to utilitarianism: the theory of justice as fairness. He has been called the greatest philosopher of liberalism since John Stuart Mill, although his later work revealed a vision of “political liberalism” that was in many ways set against the “comprehensive” defenses of liberalism of such figures as Mill, Immanuel Kant, John Dewey, and Jürgen Habermas.

Rawls attended Princeton University, graduating summa cum laude in 1943, and then joined the U.S. Army. His traumatic experiences during World War II led him to abandon his interest in the Episcopalian priesthood and opt instead for graduate school in philosophy at Princeton. He completed his thesis (“A Study on the Grounds of Ethical Knowledge”) under W. T. Stace in 1948 and in 1952 won a Fulbright fellowship to study at Oxford, which brought him into contact with Isaiah Berlin, Stuart Hampshire, and H. L. A. Hart. After Oxford, Rawls taught briefly at Cornell University, Harvard University, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, before returning to Harvard in 1962. He remained at Harvard, where he achieved the rank of university professor, even beyond his official retirement in 1991, and continued to teach until 1995, when his health began to deteriorate.

Rawls’s earliest professional publications—notably “Outline of a Decision Procedure for Ethics” (1951) and “Two Concepts of Rules” (1955)—were

important in their own right, but they scarcely suggested the scope of his later success. It was only with the appearance of “Justice as Fairness,” in 1957–58, that the direction of his political philosophical project was truly set. “Justice as Fairness,” a short version of which appeared in *The Journal of Philosophy* in 1957, with a longer, canonical version appearing in the *Philosophical Review* the following year, introduced the basic Rawlsian claim that “the fundamental idea in the concept of justice is fairness” and “it is this aspect of justice for which utilitarianism, in its classical form, is unable to account, but which is expressed, even if misleadingly, by the idea of the social contract” (Rawls 1999a, 47). Although some of the special terminology was missing, the core idea and the distinctive principles of justice were not:

The principles of justice may be thought of as arising once the constraints of having a morality are imposed upon rational and mutually self-interested parties who are related and situated in a special way. A practice is just if it is in accordance with the principles which all who participate in it might reasonably be expected to propose or acknowledge before one another when they are similarly circumstanced and required to make a firm commitment in advance without knowledge of what will be their peculiar condition, and thus when it meets standards which the parties could accept as fair should occasion arise for them to debate its merits. Regarding the participants themselves, once persons knowingly engage in a practice which they acknowledge to be fair and accept the benefits of doing so, they are bound by the duty of fair play to follow the rules when it comes their turn to do so, and this implies a limitation on their pursuit of self-interest in particular cases. (Rawls 1999a, 63)

In due course, this would become the claim that the principles of justice for the basic institutional structure of a society should be the two principles that would be chosen in an “Original Position” ensuring fairness. Pursuing that thought would be the work of a lifetime.

Over the course of the turbulent 1960s, Rawls assembled, essay by essay, the component parts of the grand presentation of his theory of justice in his

classic work, *A Theory of Justice* (1971). Although Rawls had been a critic of the U.S. war in Vietnam, his first major book was at some remove from the political and historical particulars of its time and place, making for much controversy over just how radical Rawls really was, and how and where his theory could be applied. Condemned both as hopelessly utopian and as a mouthpiece for “end of ideology” liberal gradualism, Rawls quickly found his views being assailed from all sides (Daniels [1975] 1989).

The bottom line of Rawls’s theory of justice as fairness as presented in *Theory* can seem straightforward: A just liberal society will have its basic legal, economic, and social institutions—the “basic structure of society”—arranged to accord with the following two principles of justice: First, “[e]ach person is to have an equal right to the most extensive total system of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty for all”; second, “[s]ocial and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both: (a) To the greatest benefit of the least advantaged, consistent with the just savings principle, and (b) Attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity” (Rawls [1971] 1999, 302).

These principles are lexically ordered, in that the first principle, of liberty, takes priority over the second; liberty “can be restricted only for the sake of liberty.” Moreover, the “second principle of justice is lexically prior to the principle of efficiency and to that of maximizing the sum of advantages; and fair opportunity is prior to the difference principle”—that is, (b) takes priority over (a) in the second principle (Rawls [1971] 1999, 302–03). (a) came to be called the “difference principle” and in later formulations (Rawls 2001) was placed after (b), or fair equality of opportunity, on Rawls’s account a robust conception, not only of nondiscrimination on the basis of race, religion, etc., but also of equal educational opportunity, basic health care, and limitations on the concentration of wealth.

Rawls also sketches a more general conception, perhaps appropriate to more primitive circumstances, on which all social values “are to be distributed equally unless an unequal distribution of any, or all, of these values is to everyone’s advantage.” But he allows that, given the

circumstances of justice as he understands them, it is appropriate to “attend throughout to the conditions under which the absolute weight of liberty with respect to social and economic advantages . . . would be reasonable” (Rawls [1971] 1999, 54–55).

Why these two principles? Because, again, these are the principles that would be chosen by the parties in an Original Position (OP)—vaguely analogous to a hypothetical state of nature—capturing conditions of fairness. “They are the principles that free and rational persons concerned to further their own interests would accept in an initial position of equality as defining the fundamental terms of their association” (Rawls [1971] 1999, 11). But now the parties in the OP are conceived of as being behind a “veil of ignorance,” such that they do not know their specific identities, characteristics, and distinctive individual interests, social positions, etc. They are in essence choosing institutional principles to structure the range of life prospects in the society into which they or their children could be born and live their lives, not knowing what special (but morally arbitrary) bargaining advantages they might have. The fairness of the conditions is meant to transfer to the principles themselves. Just as it is fair to decide the rules of a game in advance, people are to imagine that they need “to decide in advance how they are to regulate their claims against one another, and what is to be the foundation charter of their society” (Rawls [1971] 1999, 11), and this without the information that might prejudice them.

In trying to “present a conception of justice which generalizes and carries to a higher level of abstraction the familiar theory of the social contract” (Rawls [1971] 1999, 11) and arguing against utilitarianism, perfectionism, and other historical alternatives, Rawls argues both for the entire framework (later called Kantian Constructivism) of the principles of justice being the result of choice in a constructed fair initial situation, and, more specifically, for the choice of the two principles rather than for utilitarian principles by the parties in the OP, accepting the need for such a hypothetical device of representation. Throughout, his primary concern is with “ideal theory,” determining principles of justice for a well-ordered society in which all would accept and comply with them, thus, yielding an ideal for guiding the actual world in the direction of justice.

Much criticism of Rawls's views has been compromised by a failure to distinguish the three perspectives or points of view at work in his approach:

1. That of the parties in the OP, all of whom are identically situated
2. That of the citizens of a well-ordered society with a public conception of justice
3. That of the ordinary people living in the world as it is, who are being invited to accept the two principles and their justification.

The parties in the thought experiment that is the OP are very abstractly, hypothetically defined, and symmetrically situated, being behind the veil of ignorance and choosing on the basis of an index of primary goods, or such all-purpose resources as rights and liberties, powers and opportunities, income and wealth, and the social bases of self-respect, which are useful whatever a person's particular rational life plan. The citizens of a future well-ordered Rawlsian society are envisioned as real people who will have developed a full sense of justice thanks to living their lives out in a stable and just society, a fair system of cooperation from one generation to the next. They will be fully capable of the kind of fair play and reciprocity that justice as fairness demands, in full compliance with the demands of justice. The narrow "rationality" of the parties in the OP should not be confused or conflated with the reasonableness of real people in the other two perspectives. Rawlsian justice is no egoistic, Hobbesian bargaining game but appeals rather to a sense of justice endorsing social cooperation on genuinely fair terms, by citizens whose "interests" reflect various conceptions of the good that might include any number of religious, moral, and/or philosophical commitments. Ordinary, actually living people may or may not be so fair-minded initially but are invited to accept these ideal conceptions because they better reflect and bring order to their deepest considered convictions, especially as members of liberal democratic cultural traditions. For Rawls, from "the standpoint of moral philosophy, the best account of a person's sense of justice is not the one which fits his judgments prior to his examining any conception of justice, but rather the one which matches his judgments in reflective equilibrium . . . this state is one reached after a person has weighed various proposed conceptions and he has either revised his judgments to accord with one of them or held fast

to his initial convictions (and the corresponding conception)” (Rawls [1971] 1999, 48).

Thus, utilitarianism, which ignores the differences between persons in its aggregative maximizing of happiness, cannot do justice to our deep convictions concerning, say, the injustice of slavery, since this is no mere matter of slavery simply being less than conducive to the greatest happiness. No amount of, say, wealth and income maximization can compensate for the loss of liberty and fair equality of opportunity that characterizes slavery.

Justice as fairness mobilizes such considered convictions, at all levels of generality, using them to frame basic ideals of free and equal moral persons in a well-ordered society with a public conception of justice and, thus, affording a better “wide and deep reflective equilibrium” than utilitarianism and other alternatives. The core rights and liberties of citizens, defined especially by the first principle, are inviolable. The parties in the OP would not gamble with such fundamental matters—hence, their choice of the two lexically ordered principles.

In many respects, Rawls was his own harshest critic in the decades following the publication of *Theory*. He allowed that he had often put his points badly and in misleading terms. Thus, he came to more fully specify the *moral* ideal of the citizen reflected in the description of the parties in the OP, such that they were described as having a higher order interest in their own freedom that made it that much clearer why they would not choose principles that might allow their rights and liberties to be sacrificed. Primary goods were thus redefined as allpurpose goods for citizens so conceived, rather than as all-purpose goods period. And Rawls became, especially in the 1980s, profoundly concerned to stress that justice as fairness should be regarded as one member of a family of conceptions that are simply *political* conceptions of justice, rather than extensions or pieces of some particular comprehensive ethical and/or religious worldview, whether that be utilitarian, Kantian, Thomist, or whatever. His second major book, *Political Liberalism* (1993), in effect showed how, in a deeply but reasonably pluralistic society, it was as unreasonable to expect everyone to convert to Kantian liberalism as it was to expect everyone to convert to

Lutheranism. The aim, rather, was to find an “overlapping consensus” allowing for such profound differences. Justice as fairness was to be “political, not metaphysical,” affording a public philosophy for reasonably just constitutional regimes marked by the fact of reasonable pluralism, and public reason precluding undue appeal to reasons that cannot be shared. Rawls thus admitted “that as used in *Theory*, the idea of a well-ordered society of justice as fairness is unrealistic” (Rawls 1993, xix).

In the final version of the two principles set out in Rawls’s *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement* (2001), there are some important differences, especially to the first principle, which now reads as “[e]ach person has the same inalienable claim to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic liberties, which scheme is compatible with the same scheme of liberties for all” (Rawls 2001, 42). Rawls is at pains not to suggest that there is any such thing as “liberty” as such, that could be maximized. Rather, there are particular basic rights and liberties, for example, freedom of conscience, drawn from consideration of “what liberties provide the political and social conditions essential for the adequate development and full exercise of the two moral powers of free and equal persons” (Rawls 2001, 42), these moral powers being “the capacity to understand, to apply, and to act from . . . the principles of political justice that specify the fair terms of social cooperation” and the “capacity to have, to revise, and rationally to pursue a conception of the good” (Rawls 2001, 18–19). Given this ideal of the citizen, which needs to be modeled in the description of the parties in the OP, it is that much clearer why the two principles, lexically ordered, would be the result. Indeed, Rawls explains that we “should like the argument from the original position to be, so far as is possible, a deductive one, even if the reasoning we actually give falls short of this standard. The point in aiming for this is that we do not want the parties’ accepting the two principles to depend on psychological hypotheses or social conditions not already included in the description of the original position” (Rawls 2001, 82). Moreover, the ideal in question is more clearly an ideal of the *citizen*, of how people want themselves to be regarded specifically in their capacity as citizens, rather than an account of personal or social identity in general.

What would a just well-ordered Rawlsian society involve? As Rawls made clear in his later work, the main options that might meet the demands of

justice were either liberal socialism or a property-owning democracy. He somewhat preferred the latter, which he described as fundamentally different from welfare-state capitalism (much less laissez-faire capitalism): “[T]he background institutions of property-owning democracy work to disperse the ownership of wealth and capital, and thus to prevent a small part of society from controlling the economy, and indirectly, political life as well. By contrast, welfare-state capitalism permits a small class to have a near monopoly of the means of production.” The intent is “to put all citizens in a position to manage their own affairs on a footing of a suitable degree of social and economic equality” (Rawls 2001, 139).

But Rawls’s radicalism at home was not matched by an analogous radicalism in the sphere of global justice, although his views were progressive to a degree and at odds with “realist” schools of international relations. In *The Law of Peoples* (Rawls 1999b), Rawls set out a second use of the Original Position:

At the next level, the idea of the original position is used again, but this time to extend a liberal conception to the Law of Peoples. As in the first instance, it is a model of representation, since it models what we would regard—you and I, here and now—as fair conditions under which the parties, this time the rational representatives of liberal peoples, are to specify the Law of Peoples, guided by appropriate reasons. Both the parties as representatives and the peoples they represent are situated symmetrically and therefore fairly. In addition, peoples are modeled as rational, since the parties select from among available principles for the Law of Peoples guided by the fundamental interests of democratic societies, where these interests are expressed by the liberal principles of justice for a democratic society. Finally, the parties are subject to a veil of ignorance properly adjusted for the case at hand: they do not know, for example, the size of the territory, or the population, or the relative strength of the people whose fundamental interests they represent. Though they do know that reasonably favorable conditions obtain that make constitutional democracy possible—since they know they represent liberal societies—they do not know the extent of their natural resources, or the level of their

economic development, or other such information. (Rawls 1999b, 32–33)

The aim is to set out a “realistic utopia,” in the belief that “the nature of the social world allows reasonably just constitutional democratic societies existing as members of the Society of Peoples. In such a world peace and justice would be achieved between liberal and decent peoples both at home and abroad.” The hope is that “the great evils of human history—unjust war and oppression, religious persecution and the denial of liberty of conscience, starvation and poverty, not to mention genocide and mass murder” might be eliminated through the establishment of just or at least decent basic institutions, and that “a world Society of liberal and decent Peoples might be possible” (Rawls 1999b, 6).

“Peoples,” which are not mere nations or states, have shared sympathies, common institutions, and a moral nature and conception of justice, and “decent” peoples are those in nonliberal societies that nonetheless allow citizens “to play a substantial role, say through associations and groups, in making political decisions” and to honor the law for a Society of Peoples (Rawls 1999b, 3, n.2). And out of this second OP would come agreement on various traditional principles to guide the foreign policy of liberal or decent societies, such principles as:

1. Peoples are free and independent, and their freedom and independence are to be respected by other peoples.
 2. Peoples are to observe treaties and Religion and Western undertakings.
 3. Peoples are equal and are parties to the agreements that bind them.
 4. Peoples are to observe a duty of non-intervention.
 5. Peoples have the right of self-defense but no right to instigate war for reasons other than self-defense.
 6. Peoples are to honor human rights.
 7. Peoples are to observe certain specified restrictions in the conduct of war.
 8. Peoples have a duty to assist other peoples living under unfavorable conditions that prevent their having a just or decent political and social regime.
- (Rawls 1999b, 37)

In this case, the “parties are not given a menu of alternative principles and ideals from which to select. . . . Rather, the representative of well-ordered peoples simply reflect on the advantages of these principles of equality among peoples and see no reason to depart from them or to propose alternatives” (Rawls 1999b, 41). This ideal of a Law of Peoples could then provide the needed guidance for dealing with nonideal cases concerning outlaw states and burdened societies, pointing the way to a world “in which all peoples accept and follow the (ideal of the) Law of Peoples.” Rawls concludes that if “a reasonably just Society of Peoples whose members subordinate their power to reasonable aims is not possible, and human beings are largely amoral, if not incurably cynical and self-centered, one might ask, with Kant, whether it is worthwhile for human beings to live on the earth” (Rawls 1999b, 128).

Rawls’s work has proved to be more enduring than that of many of his many critics, who have attacked, often at great length, virtually every aspect of the Rawlsian political philosophy. Yet some criticisms have endured. Many feminists, such as Susan Moller Okin and Martha Nussbaum, have never been persuaded by Rawls’s ideal theoretical treatment of gender issues, and parallel criticisms of the Rawlsian approach to race have been advanced by critical race theorists such as Charles Mills. Moreover, despite Rawls’s sympathy for democratic socialism, many communitarians, socialists, and ecologists have faulted his privileging of two values, liberty and equality, over a wide range of alternatives, such as community, friendship, ecology, wisdom, and self-actualization. Nor can it be said that the political world has moved closer to the Rawlsian ideal or, for that matter, that the Rawlsian prioritizing of domestic justice (which has been powerfully criticized by, among others, Peter Singer, Thomas Pogge, and Martha Nussbaum) really fits the circumstances of justice today, when the most conspicuous injustices of a highly interdependent world concern the global poor.

Bart Schultz

See also [Berlin, Isaiah](#); [Contract Theory](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Dewey, John](#); [Equality and Egalitarianism](#); [Habermas, Jürgen](#); [Ideology](#); [Justice](#); [Kant, Immanuel](#); [Liberalism](#); [Mill, John Stuart](#); [Property, Theories of](#); [Radicalism](#);

[Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Rule of Law](#); [Socialism](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [Utilitarianism](#); [Utopianism](#); [Welfare State, Theories of the](#)

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In Europe modern political thought was established at the expense of the significance of traditional forms of religion. In the course of modernity, the hierarchy between *auctoritas* (authority) and *potestas* (power) has been reversed. In the Western world, it is common sense that religion has to be subordinated to politics. This great reversal, this historical process, has been called secularization in its broadest sense.

Despite their different agendas and their metaphysical assumptions, religion and politics share a common social interest. Religion as well as politics, is concerned with the behavior of individuals, their participation in and interaction with communities. Therefore, the central question concerning religion and politics is the same: How do we want to live, and how should we live? And, from a religious point of view, we can add a third question: What can we hope for? This is a genuinely religious question since it implies notions of transcendence and teleology, as well as the awareness of contingency. From the perspective of secular politics, the religious dimension is suspended for the benefit of the immanent problem of how shared social concern can be transformed into an effective cooperation. The similarity and overlapping concerns between religion and politics is also the reason for their mutual competition and cause of conflict as well as their mutual cooperation. The instrumentalization of the one by the other has shaped the history of religion and politics and is still a key issue today, despite the prescriptions of the paradigm of secularization.

Milestones in the History of Religion and Politics in the Western Tradition

From the Reformations of the sixteenth century to the Age of Enlightenment and the political systems and ideologies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and finally to the establishment of modern democracies based on constitutional law, traditional religious institutions and religious beliefs have lost their monopoly of interpreting the world and the moral imperative to conduct a good life in this world based on the prospect of the hereafter. In Europe the process of secularization has been understood as a gradual developing subordination of religion under politics, whereas in the United States of America, the relation between religion and politics has taken a different direction. In contrast to Europe's model of domination and subordination, in America, religion and politics are coordinated through a model of implicit cooperation.

Enlightenment in Europe and Its Heritage

Toward the end of the age of the Enlightenment (spanning from the mid-1650s to the start of the French Revolution in 1789), Immanuel Kant famously answered the question: "What is Enlightenment?" in an article of the same title, published in 1784:

Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's own understanding without guidance from another. This immaturity is self-incurred if its cause is not lack of understanding, but lack of resolution and courage to use it without guidance of another. The motto of enlightenment is therefore: Sapere aude! [Dare to think!] Have courage to use your own understanding! (italics in original)

Despite the many different forms and manifestations of the Enlightenment in France, Germany, England, Scotland, Italy, the Netherlands, or the United States, the main characteristics of the Enlightenment that impacted

on religion and politics are as follows: First, the predominance of individuals' ability to use their own rationality over external guidance; second, the struggle for greater individual and political freedom; and finally, the belief in the progress and development of humanity for the better by purely human efforts.

The emphasis on the individual use of reason and freedom from external obligations challenged religious authorities as well as political obedience. The critique of religion during the period of the Enlightenment led to the elaboration of the concept of a natural religion that is universal to human beings. Following the Scottish thinker of the Enlightenment David Hume, natural religion in contrast to revealed religion rejects any rationally unfounded doctrines, dogmas, and teachings by ecclesial authorities. This natural religion, a twin brother of deism, reduced religious beliefs to its core axioms. These are as follows: first, the human natural ability to discern between good and evil; second, the belief in one benevolent God who does not interfere with the world anymore since its creation; and third, the existence of a rational and meaningful design of the world. Deists have been wrongly accused of atheism by those religions that advocated the supplementation of natural religion by divine revelation. The deist's destruction of theological claims and insistence on religion as a universal anthropological *existential* datum made it possible to argue for an end to denominational disputes and political struggles based on different religious truth claims.

The spirit of Enlightenment augmented the climate for increasing religious tolerance. Enlightened absolutist monarchs like Frederick II of Prussia, Catherine II of Russia, and above all the Austrian Emperor Joseph II (in his patent of tolerance of 1781) promulgated for the first time in modern times edicts of religious tolerance. This new attitude toward a more tolerant treatment of diverse religions and religious dominations differs from earlier political agreements of tolerance in so far as the tolerance of religions was not merely based on economic reasons or for the sake of political stability. Nevertheless, the tolerance of religion was not understood in terms of a constitutionally guaranteed right of freedom of religion until the first amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America in 1789:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

In the same year, 1789, the French Revolution overturned the dominance of the Catholic Church in France, and the French Constitution of 1791 declared the freedom of opinion in religious matters as long as they do not disturb public security and tranquility. Also in 1789, the development of religious thought took divergent paths in the United States and in Europe. In the United States, a “civil religion” was developed, whereas Europe entered a period following revolutionary forces. During the years of the Reign of Terror (1792–94), an atheistic pseudo-religion called *Culte de la Raison* followed the proclamation of the first constitution of the French Revolution. Religio-political struggle was centered on the dispute over whether all power comes from God or from the people. This struggle between sovereignty of the people and Divine of Kings is best exemplified by King James I/VI’s speech to the Parliament in 1604.

Civil Religion and Democracy in America

The American constellation of religion and politics differs significantly from the various models of religion and politics on the European continent. The attitude toward religion and politics in America as well as in Europe is anchored in the ideas of the Enlightenment. However, in the light of the history of the settlement of people of different faiths in America, the heritage of the ethos of Enlightenment has been spelled out differently. The United States of America was the first country in the world to guarantee the constitutional right of the free exercise of religion, which brought into existence what Robert Bellah in an essay published in 1967 called civil religion. Although the term *civil religion* goes back as far as Augustine’s discussion of three types of religion distinguished by the Roman polymath Varro, the first modern definition of *civil religion* was given not until Jean-Jacques Rousseau in his famous *Social Contract* (1762):

The dogmas of civil religion ought to be few, simple and exactly worded, without explanation or commentary. The existence of a mighty, intelligent and beneficent divinity, possessed of foresight and providence, the life to come, the happiness of the just, the punishment of the wicked, the sanctity of the social contract and the laws.
(Rousseau 2008, 158–67)

Rousseau's understanding of civil religion proposes a type of religion that operates on a minimal theology and set of doctrines and argues for a unity between politics and religion that is based on the social contract and the laws. These prescriptions of civil religion allow the subordination of theologically inspired conflicts to a common form of religion and the constitution by simultaneously demanding a strict separation of Church and State and a strict separation between religion and politics.

An invaluable early source of the study of religion and politics in the United States is Alexis de Tocqueville's two-volume opus magnum *Democracy in America*, the first volume published in 1835 and the second in 1840. In it, religion is considered an indirect political institution that powerfully contributes to the maintenance of a democratic republic among the Americans. Despite Tocqueville's biased portrayal of religion, which reflected his Catholicism, his sociological analysis shows that religion does not necessarily contradict democratic forms of government and the spirit of Enlightenment. For the French aristocrat, religious praxis complements and perfects the shortcomings of democracy, such as the adoption of individualism by citizens and therefore the loss of solidarity, by providing a source of morality that democracy cannot generate on its own. This model of complementary cooperation then becomes imperative within the context of a liberal model of society.

Liberalism and the Problem of Institutionalized Religions

Liberalism fulfills the project of the Enlightenment in terms of religion and politics in so far as for liberal thinkers, religion is no longer seen as an

independent and autonomous authority juxtaposed to politics. Religion is understood as being just an additional, but nevertheless important and valuable, component of society, which builds on Tocqueville's description of the role that religion plays for America's democratic society. Following the views of John Stuart Mill, expressed in his treatise *On Liberty* of 1869, the key problem addressed by liberalism is that of freedom and authority. What are the limits of governmental authority over individual freedom, and what can legitimately be called a free society? Liberalism's solution to this problem is the principle of minimal political authority—interference of the state in private affairs, and at the same time a guarantee of maximum personal freedom on the basis of the ethical axiom that individual freedom ends wherever another person is deprived of obtaining his or her own personal good in his or her own way or even is impeded to obtain it. As it is evident from the emphasis on the individual as proper subject of political theory, religions of a higher degree of hierarchical institutionalization are drawn into question more radically than those religions of a low degree of hierarchical institutionalization.

The Roman Catholic Church, as an example of a very highly hierarchically organized institution, responded to the challenge of liberal tendencies of the nineteenth century by a far-reaching retreat from an increasingly secular society and established social domains of pure religious conduct opposed to what was termed modernism. During the Pian era, the period from Pope Pius IX to Pius XII (1846–1958), the Catholic Church returned in its teachings to scholastic authorities and a political model that claimed the Church's indisputable superiority over secular politics. Backed by neoscholasticism, the unity of throne and altar had been reclaimed and directed against all inchoate forms of democratic government and parliamentarianism. Key events in the history of religion and politics during the Pian era include the *Syllabus Errorum* (1864), a list of

80 theses that condemned "errors of our time" like liberalism (§10); the dogmatic proclamation of the infallibility of the Pope in religious matters (1870) and the *Kulturkampf* in Germany (1871–78). The latter stands for a number of legal measures under the Prussian Chancellor Otto von Bismarck that were concerned mainly with civil marriage and matters of education. All these laws were directed against the authority and influence of the

Catholic Church in favor of the Protestant Churches. In the United Kingdom, the country of origin of the liberal tradition, throughout the nineteenth century the relationship between the Catholic Church and government took an opposite direction. Preceded by the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829, liberal politics formally reinstated almost equal rights for Catholics and finally put an end to their social exclusion.

From Marx to Real Socialism

The history of the relationship between religion and socialism is as complex and manifold as the variety of existing forms of socialist models of society. Religion for Karl Marx was not of great significance. Not only did Marx's thorough-going materialism deny religious claims to reality, natural or revealed, but he viewed all cultural manifestations as part of a "superstructure" that was ultimately determined by a "base" of political economic relations. With exception of his statement that became a catchphrase, that religion is "the opium of the people" (stated in his forward to *Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie* written in 1843–44) and his treatise *On the Jewish Question*, only few references to religion can be found in his work. According to Marxist thought, religion is an effect of, and a tool for, the oppression of the proletariat. Following Ludwig Feuerbach, Marx observed that aspects of religion represented the best of ourselves that we alienated from ourselves by projecting it onto a god. Religion will inevitably disappear once the socioeconomic circumstances have changed. To a certain extent this view anticipates future theories of secularization, and Marxism has had a significant impact on the development of the theory of secularization.

Using *socialism* as an umbrella term accommodating political theories including Marxist utopianism, communism, Leninism, Stalinism, and real or existing socialism on the one hand, and Chartism, Antonio Gramsci's Communist Catholicism (which linked Catholic social ethics with communism in their consensus on the importance of the community for society) in Italy or the Labour movement inspired by the Anglican Church in England on the other. Socialism and Christian religion are intrinsically related and diametrically opposed to each other at the same time. Socialism and religion can and have been combined to a peaceful and fruitful

blueprint for social policy making that led to the birth of the welfare state and the formulation of the principle of subsidiarity, solidarity, and personality as the three pillars of social ethics, for example. Even where socialism was largely rejected, as in the United States, the impetus for social reform found a foothold in Christian thought, such as the U.S. social gospel movement of the early twentieth century.

Other atheist forms of socialism have resulted in bitter enmity between socialist conceptions of society and religious worldviews leading to religious suppression and persecution, especially under the former communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe. Religious institutions increasingly faced a serious enemy that had to be fought. It is a matter of fact that with the rise of totalitarian regimes like the Stalinist rule, Mao's Cultural Revolution, and also under Fascism in Italy and National Socialism in Germany, religious institutions and communities were forced either to cooperate or to disappear, with the Holocaust as the darkest moment in this conflict. For the theory of "real socialism" that emerged in the second half of the twentieth century, different models of religion and politics existed, ranging from a more or less tolerant attitude toward religion as in Hungary to the active persecution of the Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union. In the aftermath of the events of 1989, the situation changed radically. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of real socialism, various religious groups, traditional churches, as well as new religious movements began to flourish in former communist countries. Therefore, the year 1989 can also be seen as a symbolic turning point in the recent history of the relationship between religion and politics.

Religion and Democracy: Pluralism, Privatization, and Secularism

The twentieth century, particularly between 1918 and 1991, was an "age of extremes," to borrow a phrase from Eric Hobsbawm. On the one hand, democracies became the political norm and, on the other, early waves of democratization during the interwar period were interrupted by totalitarian systems. The latter and their relation to religion have been developed into a

main area of research in the field of religion and political thought and are discussed separately in the section titled “Political Religions.”

Nevertheless, the twentieth century is the century of democracy. With the triumph of democracy, the principle of freedom of religion, the separation of Church and State, and the freedom of conscience have gained constitutional status. These democratic principles became undisputed common values. In this sense, Europe followed the example of the United States and returned to its heritage of the values forecasted by the Enlightenment. The principle of freedom of religion and of conscience made it increasingly possible to choose one’s religion or even to opt for no religious belief and affiliation at all. Furthermore, the principle of the separation of Church and State put an end to the monopoly of certain religious denominations and any forms of caesaropapism, despite various local and national contractual exceptions of implicit cooperation and support.

On an individual level, democratic societies promote religious pluralism, and on a societal level, the loss of official political authority of churches accelerated the privatization of religion. Up to the turning point of 1989, religions became less visible in the public sphere and less important for the life of an increasing number of people. Moreover, traditional religious beliefs had to compete with scientific or humanist world views. Therefore, the short twentieth century is undoubtedly the century of secularism on the whole, as for example Charles Taylor has argued in his *A Secular Age* (2007).

Current Debates and Areas of Research

Despite, or perhaps because of, the movement toward a sharp distinction between politics and religion, contemporary religious thinkers have creatively engaged politics from their theological viewpoint, while students of politics have sought to consider how some political movements replicate aspects of religion. At the same time, religion has begun to appear more “relevant” to politics both theoretically, as scholars have questioned secularization theory and its Eurocentric focus, but especially practically, as the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union has faded and

a combination of terrorist actions, political instability, and immigration have brought political Islam to the forefront of public consciousness in Europe and the United States.

Political Theology

The phrase *political theology* was brought to attention to a wider audience by the German jurist Carl Schmitt and his publication of his book with the same title of 1922. Schmitt's understanding of political theology is still a matter of discussion, but it is clearly of a conservative nature with references to counter-revolutionary ideas. Schmitt's political theology must not be confused with the project of a "new political theology" elaborated by Johann Baptist Metz, whose work was intended to be a theologico-political reaction to the Second Vatican Council (1962–65). Metz argues for a renewed self-understanding of theology shaped by the experience of the Holocaust. Metz's explicit theological understanding of political theology attempts to address the challenges posed by secular and democratic societies from a strong ecclesiological and Christological point of view. According to Metz, it is the duty of the Church to get involved in social policy making by providing a critical voice that supports the fundamental values of democratic societies. Consequently, political theology is concerned with the suffering and the oppressed and places particular emphasis on the remembrance of the victims of the Holocaust, as the ultimate manifestation of human-inflicted evil and, theologically speaking, the denial of the will of God and humankind's hubris. This genuine option for the victims and the poor was open to be interpreted in Marxist terms of the liberation of the proletariat, which was further developed in South and Latin American liberation theology. From the Protestant side, the idea of political theology has been elaborated in terms of a "public theology." As is evident from its name, public theology is designed to overcome the privatization of religion and to reclaim political authority, mainly in terms of a partnership between the state and faith-based communities similar to the role nongovernmental organizations play in democracies.

Over the last decade the term *political theology* has also been used in combination with political Islam or Hindu nationalism. Nevertheless, it is not always clear how political theology is distinguished from religious

fundamentalism. On the whole, political theology is predominantly a theological school of thought based on the idea that political claims can be made on the basis of a theological and therefore absolute truth. The main question concerns the limits of these theologically grounded claims within the framework of a liberal, democratic state built on the rule of secular law.

Political Religions

Methodologically, the study of political religions is an offspring of the studies on totalitarianism. The first generation of researchers of the study of totalitarianism were eyewitnesses of the atrocities of National Socialism. Ernst Fraenkel's *The Dual State: A Contribution to the Theory of Dictatorship* (1942), Max Horkheimer's and Theodor Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944), or Hannah Arendt's seminal work *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), were all written by German emigrants of Jewish origin. The outset of the research on totalitarianism is therefore based on the analysis of the rise of National Socialism and a structural and anthropological reflection on the factual possibility of the Holocaust. A second generation of researchers such as Emilio Gentile, who wrote *Politics as Religion* (2006), concentrate on the symbolic dimension of totalitarian systems. To explore the symbolic and mythical contents of totalitarian systems, the term *political religion* was coined with reference to the early work of Eric Voegelin (1938). According to these authors, totalitarian forms of governments like fascism, national socialism, Stalinism, or Maoism cannot be understood unless the mythic and pseudoor quasi-religious nature of their political program is taken into account. These new researches into the religious nature of totalitarianism draw attention to those aspects of political movements and politics in general that have long been neglected by purely empirical studies of these phenomena.

The New Visibility of Religion

Over the last decades shaped by the political events of 1989 and their aftermath, sociological theories of secularization were subject to extensive review regarding their fundamental assumptions concerning the future of religion and the nature of religious phenomena in general. The reemergence

of religion after the collapse of communist systems has shown that the classic understanding of secularization following Max Weber is insufficient to explain and understand the social functions of religions. According to the radical secularization thesis, religion should disappear entirely as a result of a universal process of rationalization linked to the progress of modernity or, according to the Marxist version, as a result of the changing socioeconomic conditions. At least three observations have drawn the classic theory of secularization into question. First, despite the decreasing numbers of church attendance, new forms of religiosity developed. Consequently, the institutional nature of religion has been reconsidered. Furthermore, the analysis of non-European and non-Christian religions has shown that the Western concept of religion is not necessarily the most appropriate conceptual tool to describe new religious movements or other religious communities. Second, the European model of strict separation of religion and politics is called into question as a benchmark model of universal validity by the American coexistence of technological progress and advanced modernity. Finally, an increased awareness of religious fundamentalism and religiously inspired violence reopened the debate about the compatibility of secular and religious lifestyles. Of course, as Marx would have been the first to point out, this debate is not just a debate about differing and mutually excluding ideologies, but it is also a problem underpinned by economic realities.

A number of suggestions have been made to adjust the sociological theory of secularization. To describe more accurately the new situation, terms such as deprivatization of religion, postsecularity, new syncretism, and vicarious religion among others have been coined. The key problem underlying these revisions of the understanding of secularization is the difference between a so-called reemergence of religion and a new visibility of religion. Are we experiencing a factual and quantitative increase of religion, or is religion just more visible? Commonly accepted criteria need to be developed to assess the growth or decline of religion and to define what religion is and what it is not. Moreover, waves of migration and accelerated mobility pose the juridico-political question of the compatibility of secular and religious law. Within the context of secular, democratic, and constitutional states, the problem is centered around the elementary right of the freedom of religion and its exercise and minority rights on the one hand, and the dogma of

secular neutrality toward religion and cultural values on the other. From the legal perspective, the confrontation between different systems of law and their different concepts of legitimacy can be translated into the debate about the limits and appropriateness of positive law and the conformance and accommodation of law guided by religious convictions. This is best illustrated by the discourse on the possibility of what has been called Euro-Islam.

Conclusion

Since the Enlightenment, “modern political thought” has inclined toward and even been defined by secularization and the flight from religious forms of political thought. Indeed, analyses of the interactions between religion and politics have rarely been free of a political interest by the inquirer either for or against religious influence in politics. If religion is back on the agenda of political thinkers in what some consider a postmodern, post-Enlightenment context, the claim of a new visibility of religion also leads to the political question of whose interest it is to make religion more visible and in what ways the religion at stake is portrayed.

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See also [Arendt, Hannah](#); [Christian Socialism](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Feuerbach, Ludwig](#); [Frankfurt School](#); [Freedom of Expression](#); [French Enlightenment](#); [French Revolution](#); [Political Thought of the](#); [Hume, David](#); [Liberalism](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Mill, John Stuart](#); [National Socialism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Pluralism](#); [Psychology and Politics](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Rousseau, Jean-Jacques](#); [Tocqueville, Alexis de](#); [Toleration](#); [Totalitarianism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [Voegelin, Eric](#)

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The Renaissance is customarily said to have begun with the observation by Francesco Petrarca (Petrarch) in the fourteenth century that a “dark age” separated him and his contemporaries from the splendor of the ancient world. Modernity was bad, and what was needed was a rebirth of classical notions of beauty, philosophy, and politics. The movement that culminated in the Enlightenment around the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, by contrast, viewed classical antiquity as partly responsible for the medieval dark ages that had to be overcome and so advocated a revolutionary transformation of society. What united Renaissance and early modern political thought, however, was this rejection of medieval political thought. Specifically, politics was no longer treated as the application of theology or even as devoted to the cultivation of a person’s capacity for happiness. Politics was simply about the preservation and acquisition of material goods, and this did not in any way detract from its dignity. This revolution in political thought was mostly a result of the sixteenth-century Florentine Niccolò Machiavelli and the seventeenth-century Englishmen Thomas Hobbes and John Locke.

Premodernity as the Kingdom of Darkness

Machiavelli appears at first glance to share in the Renaissance judgment that a return to ancient modes and orders is desirable. He uses the same language of accidents, necessity, fortune, virtue, and corruption. When he gives contrasting ancient and modern examples, the moderns almost universally come off as small or foolish, even when successful. One of his major works, the *Discourses on Livy*, is devoted primarily to the ancient Roman republic. Roman authors of the late republican and early imperial periods had taught Machiavelli's contemporaries to attribute political ills to corruption and a lack of virtue. Machiavelli's language reflects this strand of Renaissance thought.

In the view the civic humanists learned from their Roman predecessors, a republic is virtuous when its citizens devote themselves to the public good. In time, however, corruption seeps in and ambitious individuals stir up trouble between the classes. The people choose a champion to be their emperor, surrendering political liberty for bread and circuses. A corrupt city must either experience a rebirth of its lost ancient virtue or cease to be a republic any longer.

Although Machiavelli adopts the language of Renaissance republicanism, the ideas he expresses with that language differ in crucial respects. When Machiavelli says that republics must often be drawn back toward their beginnings or principles in the *Discourses*, for example, the beginning he has in mind is a state of fear. Fear of external enemies or of the magistrates, rather than of moral uprightness, makes people willing to sacrifice for the public good. Although calls to restore lost virtue must have a conservative or traditional hue, the reinvigorating fear that Machiavelli says must be returned to can also be brought about in the course of revolutionary change.

Machiavelli claims to bring new modes and orders, comparing himself to a discoverer of new and distant lands. He does not claim to be restoring ancient modes and orders. His *Discourses* begin by treating Livy as the guide to a Rome that should be emulated, but by the end of the first book, it becomes evident that Livy's conservatism makes him an unreliable historian. Machiavelli must change Livian stories to make Rome worthy of imitation. The Rome that Machiavelli says we should restore is not the Rome preserved in the histories. Machiavelli does not look to Rome for

inspiration but instead founds his political science on what he himself has discovered about human beings. In *The Prince*, he declares a break from all previous thinkers, whom he disparages as uselessly idealistic, devoting himself instead to the “effectual truth” of worldly things.

After Machiavelli, the dominant strands of political thought tended also to counsel the need for innovation rather than a rebirth of antiquity. This innovation in political thought was to be complementary with advances in the physical sciences.

Hobbes attempted to present his arguments in *Leviathan* as the necessary consequence of understanding human beings as simply matter in motion. False scientific theories, he argued, provided a false image of human nature and so buttressed ineffective political orders.

Locke more than anyone else became the philosopher of the Enlightenment. Although the political thought contained in *Two Treatises of Government* and *A Letter Concerning Toleration* does not trumpet a radically new understanding of human nature, and *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* mutes its innovations’ political implication even as it breaks from medieval conceptions of human nature and morality, the Lockean corpus as a whole represents a wholesale rejection of medieval and classical thought.

The revolution sought by Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Locke was not simply in political practice, but in ideas. There is nothing novel in suggesting that political practice needs reforming. Thomas More, for example, opens *Utopia* by having his main character, Raphael Hythlodæus, lambast the flattery and deceit that pervade high politics, citing these as the reason why his wisdom does not benefit the public. More does not take the additional step toward modernity, however, by openly floating the suggestion that the true reason Hythlodæus cannot participate in politics is that what he has absorbed from the ancients has made him foolish, not wise. Much of *Utopia* is instead devoted to showing that the communism advocated in Plato’s *Republic* is indeed practicable. And although there are hints that More himself was not as keen on the Utopian system as Hythlodæus’s encomium might suggest, More’s purpose in criticizing these quasi-Platonic

institutions, unlike those of other early modern thinkers, was not to argue for a radical break from ancient political philosophy.

Legitimacy and Individual Rights

Modern political thought is strikingly democratic in its principles. Here, Hobbes and Locke had a greater impact than Machiavelli. This is not to say that Machiavelli did not have democratic leanings. He did argue that a prince should side with the people rather than with the great. His reasons, however, had nothing to do with justice or legitimacy. Instead, a founder's legacy is more secure if the poor are attached to it, and in defending the people, a politician acquires a pretext for eliminating his rivals. Those who deprive the people of political power cannot use them in war, and for that reason, the people must have a share in ruling. Machiavelli criticizes the Spartan and Venetian oligarchies for being unable to hold on to the lands they conquered, not for being oligarchies. A prince should not offend an individual's property or dignity, not because people have a right to either but because they will seek revenge.

Hobbes and Locke, by contrast, made an appeal to natural rights in grounding their political theories. These rights were shared equally by all and could be surrendered only by consent. They were natural insofar as they could be known by reason, i.e., without special revelation.

To understand the importance of the natural rights doctrine, it is useful to contrast it with medieval natural law. Natural law, too, is discoverable without special revelation, but there is no reason why it should declare human beings equal in any interesting sense. Thomas Aquinas, whose work was the paradigm of medieval thinking about natural law, followed Aristotle in suggesting that the wise have a right to rule, which would mean that the unwise have no right to withhold their consent from that rule. Natural law might establish a relationship between adults analogous to that of a parent over a child, while the logic that discloses natural rights begins from the equality of each individual, at least insofar as no one must acknowledge another as having a right to command them. Natural law is what reason declares is good for a community, demanding the sacrifice of that community's members for a good they will no longer enjoy. A focus on

natural rights means that the community must justify itself to the individual, any apparent sacrifices actually being outweighed by greater benefits to be received from the community.

Jean Bodin provides an example of an amalgam of modern and medieval political thought in this regard. Bodin broke with the Aristotelian tradition in his 1576 work, *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, by declaring that society had its origin in force and violence, not the justice or virtue of its first kings, while also asserting that a commonwealth must be founded on the laws of nature in order to be distinct from a band of robbers. Yet Bodin does not conclude from this that the societies that actually exist lack authority. Indeed, he determines the extent of sovereignty by looking to what it would mean for the sovereign to have authority. He presumes that sovereign authority exists. On this basis, he argues that sovereignty must be an absolute and perpetual power to make laws binding on others, being accountable only to God for the exercise of that power. He does not argue, as Hobbes and Locke would later do, that submission to authority is good for the individual, for he does not present sovereignty as standing in need of any justification. God established sovereigns through which His laws might be executed.

Both Hobbes and Locke begin with the premise that authority does not exist by nature or divine dispensation. If one human disobeys another, the first might be imprudent, but he or she cannot rightly be said to be rebellious, and punishment if any can be only for the harm caused, not for disobedience. Every political community by contrast has a hierarchy of some kind, which is to say, authority the disregard of which is in itself punishable. A political community does not, therefore, exist by nature. By nature, individuals are free to act in whatever way seems best to them. The state of nature is anarchic.

Political authority may not be natural, but it is nonetheless desirable. Hobbes and Locke agree that without an enforced, positive law, people experience physical misery that outweighs the pleasure of deep autonomy. Locke suggests, contrary to Hobbes, that one can speak of right and wrong in the state of nature, but this natural justice is so poorly enforced that it might as well not exist. For both, the escape from the state of nature is

imperative. Each individual must consent, therefore, to surrender his or her freedom and submit to an authority who has no rational right to rule other than their people's arbitrary choice of them as their ruler.

In neither Hobbes nor Locke does this democratic principle of natural rights lead to a democratic form of government, although the groundwork for democracy can be seen. Hobbes said that rule by the people could be legitimate, but historical evidence of actual democracies suggests that domestic peace would be better served by a sovereign monarch. Locke also suggests that any form of government might be legitimate (except one that claimed a right to mistreat the people). The people have a right to certain legal protections, and certain of these protections, most notably those regarding private property and taxes upon it, can be altered only with a further act of consent by the people. Beyond these constraints, however, the Lockean commonwealth can adopt any constitution it sees fit.

The sovereign authority, however many people share in it, disappears only when it fails to do its job, namely, to keep the individual safe. One example of such a failure is levying of a kind of war on the people. Hobbes mentions briefly in *De Cive* that this might justify revolution but drops this possibility entirely from *Leviathan*. It is more important for Hobbes that people be brought to obedience than that all the exceptions to authority be made plain. For Locke, by contrast, the people are *too* prone to obedience. Locke, moreover, was writing to justify a particular revolutionary act. (That conspiracy was broken up and Locke was forced into exile after the discovery of the Rye House Plot. He published his *Two Treatises of Government* years later as though it had been written to justify a different revolution, the Glorious Revolution.) Locke therefore addresses the dissolution of political authority at far greater length and emphasizes that the people may treat their governors as public enemies if the latter so much as maneuver themselves into a position where they might become public enemies. One need not wait until the ship reaches Algiers, Locke intones, to determine that the captain intends to sell the passengers into slavery—and act preemptively to stop it. The subsequent transformation of the doctrine of natural rights into an argument for democracy required only the empirical observation that democratic forms best prevent the kinds of abuses that would justify revolution.

Politics as Independent From Theology

Premodern writings on politics encompassed a great deal that we would not now consider to be political. The dominant tendency in the Middle Ages was to treat politics as a subfield of theology. God's law was the source of valid municipal and international law and of guidance for those confronted with invalid laws or rulers. The question was not one of how to organize society in general, but of how to organize a society of Christians, and this meant that the political question came to be one of how to organize a church. In the early modern period in England, authors who cleaved to the premodern conception of politics, such as the Anglican theologian Richard Hooker, spoke about secular politics in the course of describing the "ecclesiastical polity." Modern political thought is characterized, in contrast, by its proclaimed separation from theology.

The separation of politics from theology does not necessarily mean that politics must be separate from religion. Machiavelli, for example, argued in both the *Prince* and the *Discourses on Livy* that the rulers would find it useful to manipulate religious beliefs. Similarly, Hobbes said in *Leviathan* that the sovereign was the ultimate arbiter in matters of religion.

In both cases, however, political considerations trumped religious ones. Machiavelli did not argue that Christianity demanded that it be manipulated to the ruler's profit. Hobbes said that political stability would be enhanced by the sovereign's imposition of religious uniformity. Religion was a powerful force in politics, and differences in religion led to civil wars. Some scholars claim that the wars and revolutions arising from religious discord were the primary motivation in the development of Hobbes's support for absolute monarchy. Hobbes did make gestures in the direction of providing biblical support for his theory, but practically no one believed these to have been sincere at the time, and only a minority of scholars have come to defend Hobbes's piety. Politics had a logic all its own, not one subordinate to theology, even if that political logic could justify controlling religion.

Machiavelli is renowned for counseling deception and violence in the pursuit of power, more obviously in the *Prince* but also in the *Discourses*

on *Livy*. What he objects to is their incompetent use or half-measures. He gives as an example one Giampaolo Baglioni, a tyrant who had murdered his cousins and nephews and who was involved inappropriately with his sister, but who balked when it came to killing the Pope and all the cardinals, even though that would have preserved his rule over Perugia and, Machiavelli insists, gained him an eternal memory for greatness that would have surpassed any infamy that might have arisen from the deed. Machiavelli never speaks of hell or of the soul, even to assure his readers that his counsel will not send the latter to the former. Religious considerations seem to be completely foreign to his thinking. He occasionally says of a certain subject that it is too exalted for the human mind to comprehend, but he shows no hesitation in immediately discoursing on matters that would require comprehension of that exalted subject if he thought theology relevant to politics.

Hobbes based his arguments for absolute monarchy on natural law, a theory with deeply religious overtones. Aquinas had suggested that some of God's demands for humanity were knowable through the natural faculty of reason without any special communication from God. Natural law was that part of divine command that human beings could figure out for themselves. Hobbes suggests that human beings do come to know the natural law through reason, but he is explicit that what reason discovers cannot properly speaking be called a law at all, let alone a law known rationally to have been commanded by God. And what reason teaches, according to Hobbes, is that, in the absence of any secular enforcement of human authority, everyone has a right to everyone and everything, including to kill preemptively. The law of nature on which Hobbesian political theory is built is divorced from traditional theological principles. Those who see Hobbes as continuing within a Christian tradition situate him among those who, like Augustine, view theology and faith as suprarational and so as lying outside of the rational inquiry into politics, or among those who say that saintliness grants no political authority and so lies outside the considerations of political theory. The logic of politics proceeds without reference to Christian principles. Natural right replaces natural law.

It is Locke who transformed the separation of political theory from traditional theology into the separation of church and state. Although some

scholars question whether Locke's political arguments rest on his theological ones or even whether he was seriously religious at all, it is generally recognized that he was among the first successfully to argue that politics and religion represented two nonoverlapping spheres of life. Churches, he argued in the *Letter Concerning Toleration*, could not demand civil penalties for unorthodox religious belief or practice. Civil magistrates could not have any concern beyond the maintenance of public order. Contrary to Hobbes's assertion (and Locke's own earlier, unpublished arguments), an imposed uniformity of religion did not serve the goal of public order. The civil magistrate is to intervene in religious affairs only when they threaten political goods, such as when a church claims that no obedience is owed to heretical magistrates or attempts to turn the civil power to the persecution of religious enemies. The state tolerates any church that restricts itself to private, salvific concerns, and only those churches.

Baruch Spinoza had earlier argued in the *Theologico-Political Treatise* for a religious toleration so broad as to include all speculative philosophy within it. In this way, religion would be deprived of the weapons of state in suppressing science that was at odds with tradition. But his arguments in this direction seemed to involve the refutation of scriptural authority altogether, and when the Bishop of Worcester wished to defame Locke for *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, he named him a follower of Hobbes and Spinoza.

It was not clear from the outset why the civic humanism that characterized Renaissance political thought could not also be a kind of Christian humanism. Whatever the possibilities, Machiavelli made no effort to combine Christianity with clear-sighted political investigations. Whether or not he, and Hobbes after him, believed that political theory did not have to follow Christian theology because that theology was manifestly false, they did act as though political theory was best pursued independently from theology. Locke's relationship with Christianity, by contrast, is more complicated. On the one hand, he devoted a great deal of energy to reforming Christianity so that the independence of political thought might be religiously palatable. On the other hand, the beliefs outlined in *The Reasonableness of Christianity* are those that can bow to a roughly

Hobbesian political order, and the civil magistrate is to compel conformity to whatever religious scruples permit one to bow to such an order.

Political Hedonism

Early modern political thought is founded on a kind of hedonism. Hobbes and Locke explicitly justify political society on the basis of what conduces to the avoidance of physical discomfort (in *Leviathan* and *Two Treatises of Government*, respectively). Just as society is not for the salvation of the soul, neither is it for the cultivation of virtue, and they do not ask whether a life of bourgeois industriousness is fundamentally satisfying. Politics for both is solely about what Hobbes called commodious living and Locke, the preservation of life, liberty, and estate. The psychology that each presents makes pleasure and pain the sole determinants of human action and belief (Hobbes in *Leviathan* and Locke in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*). Those inspired by the civic humanism of the Renaissance continued to speak of virtue in the early modern period and feel that politics was threatened most by corruption, but these politicians and pamphleteers did not have the lasting intellectual impact of Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Locke. Virtue, as devotion to the public good and regular habits, sustained the community and led to personal success. This was not the otherworldly virtue of the Christian saint, but neither was it the superb virtue of the Aristotelian gentleman, which led to happiness rather than to worldly success and did not simply make one a good citizen. Virtue as understood by the moderns was open to the subversive suggestion that it was either foolish sacrifice or merely material self-interest well understood, and the rhetoric of virtue slowly faded.

The hedonistic underpinnings of their philosophy partly explain why politics is not natural for either Hobbes or Locke as it was for Aristotle. A human being's possession of reason, Aristotle had argued in the *Politics*, engenders a desire for a community bound by shared opinions of the good, just, and advantageous, and in this way the political community called the city differs from any hive or herd, or even family or village, which societies came into being in order to meet routine physical needs. The human desire for happiness results in a directedness toward a more robust political life than just being good neighbors, and Aristotle's one-line rejoinder to

Lycophron's social compact theory is that the result of that compact would not suffice for a true city. The political society that Hobbes and Locke legitimate is not a city in the full Aristotelian sense, but it does not have to be, for in their view the Aristotelian city is not necessary for human happiness. Reason for both Englishmen is an instrument for the satisfaction of our desires, not an independent source of longings, and those desires are those of the body, not of the soul.

This break from Aristotle was prepared by Machiavelli. The reason he gave in the *Discourses on Livy* for the necessity of a periodic return to the beginnings of a republic is that republics are not natural bodies with a coherent purpose that they naturally strive to accomplish but are instead mixed bodies. Republics are composed of disparate elements whose natural tendency is to move away from one another. Things may have an inclination to move toward their natural end, but that end for individuals is not the common good, and so only force can bring or keep individuals together. Human beings are reliably moved by threats to their physical well-being because that is where their true good lies. The Roman nobility, which claimed to care more for honor than for comfort, in fact surrendered all of its political prerogatives to defend its property. Men will forgive the murder of their father, Machiavelli says in the *Prince*, but not the seizure of their patrimony. Machiavelli never suggests that the desire for glory that motivates great princes and republican leaders is sensible.

Renaissance and early modern political thinkers were not the first to deny that politics was natural or to suggest that goods other than pleasure were illusory or reducible to pleasure. Premodern hedonists, however, did not have political programs. The government of Utopia was directed toward pleasure, and the Utopians were hedonists, but More glossed at the end of the book that such a system was contrary to human nature and dignity. He was a part of a receding tradition that recognized that such a system could not actually work and so considered itself speculative rather than prescriptive when it came to politics and morals. The novelty of modern political thought was the idea that one could have a functioning and fulfilling political order that did not appeal to something higher than material needs and desires. Modernity can be said to begin when this idea came to be the center of political thought, either as a guiding principle or,

with greater intensity as modernity progressed, as what had to be struggled against.

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See also [American Political Thought](#); [Authority](#); [Contract Theory](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Liberalism](#); [Locke, John](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Natural Law](#); [Obedience, Political](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Republicanism](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [State of Nature](#); [Utilitarianism](#)

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Representation

Representation

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Representation

Representation is the foundational concept of modern politics. The search for a form of representative government suitable to advanced societies of the size, complexity, and diversity of modern states is definitive of modern politics itself.

The question of political representation played a critical role in the American and the French revolutions, which generated the first large-scale republics founded on a representative principle. For all their differences, Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès (1748–1836) and James Madison (1751–1836) believed that properly modern government was representative government, and representation was not a second-best form of government to democracy but an improvement on it. It was consistent with the principle of popular sovereignty, but free from the excesses of crude democratic politics. It derived from the consent of individuals, but elected representatives could act as trustees, exercising their judgment in the interest of the whole.

By the nineteenth century, the democratic pressures on representative government mounted. The utilitarian movement asked for the extension of franchise, secret ballots, regular elections, and stronger popular control over representatives, seen as self-interested individuals, no different from everyone else. But the attempted reduction of representatives to mandated delegates met resistance. For John Stuart Mill (1806–73), only representation could make democracy safe for the world. It provided a protection against mediocrity, interest-based politics, and the threat of

democratic majorities, provided that different views in society were proportionally represented, and representatives remained free to exchange views in Parliament, and accept the force of the best argument.

At the turn of the twentieth century, representation by notables, unbound by the wishes of those who elect them, and free to vote in Parliament according to their personal judgment, gave way to party-based representation. This made politics more bureaucratic, more interest-based, more deal-oriented—in other words, less deliberative. Politics also became more plebiscitary, with party leaders using the party's machine to reach out beyond a partisan base, and gain the acclaim of the masses. At times, this was done through a direct form of voting affirming or rejecting a leader or a reform (i.e., a referendum), but the system must be understood more widely as a system of acclaim based on a charismatic form of authority.

The demise of the mass party, in the mid-1960s, coincided with the rise of the media, which has allowed for a re-personalization of representation that often explores the populist presumption of a direct relation between the leader and the people, regardless of the platform on which he or she is elected. In the process, parties have found themselves reduced to vehicles of a personal vision of leadership and competing with civil society groups as instruments of engagement and representation.

These transformations have challenged prevailing theoretical views on political representation. This is especially true of the standard account of representation as a principal–agent relationship, where the principals—individuals aggregated in constituencies formed on a territorial basis—authorize, through election, agents to “stand for” and “act on” their interests, and hold them accountable in subsequent elections.

Some question the territorial nature of the constituency, in view of the growing political relevance of nonterritorial issues, such as the environment. Others note its present bias, and point to the necessity of extending the notion of representation to encompass future generations. A third group of critics argues that the conception of principals as formally equal individuals leaves existing patterns of marginalization unaddressed and chronically underrepresents historically disadvantaged groups, which form relevant nongeographical constituencies. Another set of concerns is

raised by deliberative democrats, for whom the standard account reduces political judgment to the aggregation of private preferences, and undermines their favored conception of representation as an ongoing relationship between constituency and representative, within which the constituency, its interests, and identity are constituted, rather than merely reflected. Finally, the emergence of new, nonelective, forms of political representation, operating outside of formal procedures of authorization and accountability, have reopened the question of what constitutes a representational relationship, and have called for conceptual innovation. This has led to attempts to derive normative accounts of representation from the specific functions different kinds of representation fulfill, and to the introduction of new typologies of representation, beyond the classic distinction among formalistic, descriptive, symbolic, and substantive forms of representing (Pitkin 1967). How these new forms of informal representation work with electoral representation, and with one another, is a question for the future.

Another emerging area of research concerns the relationship between representation and democracy. Historically, representation has been seen in opposition to democracy. But the view of representative democracy as a mixed regime composed of democratic and undemocratic components is being opposed by those who believe that it forms a democratic model in its own right. The study of the conditions that enable representation to be democratic will occupy us in years to come.

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See also [Democratic Theory](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [French Revolution](#); [Political Thought of the](#); [General Will](#); [Liberty](#); [Theories of](#); [Madison, James](#); [Paine, Thomas](#); [Proportional Representation](#); [Rousseau, Jean-Jacques](#); [Mill, John Stuart](#); [Sièyes, Emmanuel Joseph](#); [State](#); [Theories of the](#)

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Iseult Honohan Iseult Honohan

Republicanism

Republicanism

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Republicanism

Republicanism, or “civic republicanism,” is a political tradition that focuses on the values of freedom and the common good. Freedom is understood as politically realized among interdependent citizens who are self-governing, rather than being a natural property of individuals. As members of a political community, rather than any prepolitical community, citizens share a common good.

Republicanism is not identical to either pure democracy or the absence of monarchy per se. It entails rather the rule of law, a balance among social forces or institutions, and the engagement of citizens disposed to support the common good, displaying “civic virtue.” Thus, republicans address both concerns for freedom and the common good, rights and duties, and corresponding fears of the dangers of tyranny and corruption. They stress the importance of civic and political participation, although there is disagreement between two main strands of republicanism on whether such participation is valuable intrinsically or instrumentally. Thus, although republicans agree that freedom requires more than the absence of immediate interference, they disagree on whether it is to be understood in a more positive sense of self-realization through political activity, or as nondomination, constituted through a legal status that gives citizens secure protection from arbitrary interference by the state and other agents.

Although it is, therefore, a contested theory, characterized by considerable internal diversity, republicans share a distinctive cluster of values, however

differently they frame them, namely, freedom, participation in self-government, and commitment to the common good.

With Greek and Roman antecedents—the term comes from the Latin, *res publica* (the public concern, formerly translated as “commonwealth”) —“classical” republicanism emerged in early modern Europe, articulated by such figures as Niccolò Machiavelli and James Harrington. This view was more aristocratic than democratic, and the civic virtue of citizens had a distinctly military and masculine character. Its modern expression was developed especially by the contrasting eighteenth-century thinkers James Madison and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Their thought influenced the American and French revolutions and subsequent republics. Madison, in the *Federalist Papers*, boldly redefined a republic as government through representatives, as opposed to the direct popular rule of a democracy. Rousseau’s republicanism, in contrast, focused on the ideal of a small sovereign people, who would be free because they were self-governing, even if he saw little prospect of its realization in the modern world of nation-states. Mary Wollstonecraft outlined an account that included women as equal citizens.

In the nineteenth century, republicanism was somewhat overshadowed by the younger tradition of liberalism, to which it contributed. The term “republican” was applied to a range of movements that interpreted and prioritized freedom and the common good in a variety of ways. French republicanism came to be characterized by a unitary conception of the state, an unmediated relationship between the state and the autonomous individual citizen, and an emphasis on rationality and strict secularism (*laïcité*) in public affairs. In Ireland, republicanism connoted primarily a militant nationalist movement. The connection of the U.S. Republican Party, so named in 1854 to evoke Thomas Jefferson’s legacy for the new antislavery party, is mainly historical.

Republicanism experienced a significant revival in the late twentieth century, after the collapse of the socialist alternative in practice and in the wake of the liberal–communitarian debate that dominated Anglo-American political philosophy in the 1990s. This revival saw the articulation of two strands of republicanism, both invoking historical antecedents. One,

expressed by thinkers from Hannah Arendt and J. G. A. Pocock to Charles Taylor and Michael Sandel, emphasizes the value of political participation as realizing freedom and shared goods. This perspective is sometimes called “neo-Athenian” or “civic humanist” by its critics, but some thinkers in this strand lean toward communitarian positions, and others toward liberal ones. The other strand, “neorepublicanism,” articulated primarily by Philip Pettit and Quentin Skinner, develops the idea of freedom as nondomination, secure protection from the threat of arbitrary interference by the state. Although the latter strand requires institutions that encourage accountability and contestation of power, it does not attribute intrinsic value to political participation.

Republican thought, while still developing, has faced a variety of criticisms. Critics of the contemporary revival argue that it cannot escape its historical legacy of elitism and militarism, or its masculine model of citizenship. Others argue that insofar as contemporary republicanism has avoided these features, it does not differ significantly from liberalism. Liberalism, however, takes many forms; contemporary republicanism may be best understood as contrasted to libertarian theories of the self-sufficiency of individuals, freedom as the absence of interference, and the idea that government is the principal threat to individual freedom.

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See also [American Political Thought](#); [Arendt, Hannah](#); [Citizenship](#); [Communitarianism and Liberalism](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Equality and Egalitarianism](#); [Federalist Papers](#); [French Political Thought](#); [French Revolution, Political Thought of the](#); [General Will](#); [Ideology](#); [Irish Political Thought](#); [Jefferson, Thomas](#); [Liberalism](#); [Libertarianism](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Madison, James](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Radicalism](#); [Renaissance and Early Modern Political Thought](#); [Representation](#); [Rousseau, Jean-Jacques](#); [Rule of Law](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Wollstonecraft, Mary](#).

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Revolution

Revolution

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Revolution

Explaining how and why revolutions happen has been an abiding concern of political thinkers, historians, and social scientists since at least the nineteenth century. But attempts at explanation have produced little consensus. There is always a temptation to answer the question in a simple way—something like: “Revolutions happen when people are oppressed, and organize to overthrow the system of their oppression.” But any cursory review of the literature on revolutions will show that such a causal statement will not do. Many oppressive social systems do not experience revolution, while revolution sometimes springs up where social conditions are relatively benign. And within a given society, it is sometimes not the most oppressed groups that lead revolutions but relatively privileged ones. So it is not clear that any simple statement can give even a parsimonious answer to the question of how or why revolutions happen.

Defining Revolution

Political scientist Samuel Huntington defined revolution in 1968 as “a rapid, fundamental, and violent domestic change in the dominant values and myths of a society, in its political institutions, social structure, leadership, and government activity and policies. Revolutions are thus to be distinguished from insurrections, rebellions, revolts, coups, and wars of independence” (Huntington 1968, 254).

But Charles Tilly, a pioneering scholar of revolutions and social movements, argued that no revolution meeting this definition had ever happened. Tilly defined revolution in 1993 as “a forcible transfer of power over a state in the course of which at least two distinct blocs of contenders make incompatible claims to control the state, and some significant portion of the population subject to the state’s jurisdiction acquiesces in the claims of each bloc” (Tilly 1993, 8).

However, some scholars suggest that Tilly’s definition places too much emphasis on power struggle and not enough on change—asking whether, if there is no meaningful change after the power struggle, there can really have been a revolution at all.

Such fundamental change is central to the definition used by Theda Skocpol, perhaps the best-known sociologist of revolution. Distinguishing “social revolutions” from “political revolutions,” in 1979, she defined the former as “rapid, basic transformations of a society’s state and class structures . . . accompanied and in part carried through by class-based revolts from below” (Skocpol 1979, 4).

But this definition also is contested. Some have asked whether all of Skocpol’s paradigmatic cases of social revolution (France, Russia, and China) really brought about as much social change as this definition suggests. And some have suggested that revolutionary coalitions may be based on identities other than class.

Revolution has also inspired much political thought beyond the academy. For Karl Marx, revolution was, first, the mechanism by which history moved from one stage to another, as the evolution of society’s economic base made obsolete the existing relations of production (the system determining who and which class controls what, and how), and led ascendant classes such as the bourgeoisie to usurp them for new ones. Second, revolution was also the means by which capitalism would ultimately be overthrown to make way for the next stage of history, socialism, which would eventually metamorphose into a stateless communist society. Marx also suggested that socialist revolution would occur only after capitalism had been allowed to develop fully—and that it would be led by the offspring of that capitalist development, the organized

industrial proletariat. But scholars of revolution point out that it is difficult to identify any revolution ever occurring along these lines—even among those revolutions that have birthed nominally Marxist regimes.

Many of these revolutions have occurred in societies where capitalism was underdeveloped, where peasants and artisans were more important than Marx's proletariat to the revolution, and where small cadres of intellectuals and militants intervened to guide the revolution along "Marxist" lines. Marxists have struggled with these paradoxes ever since.

Emergence of the Modern Idea of Revolution

Clearly, revolution presents major definitional, conceptual, and theoretical challenges. It has existed as a concept as much as an objective category, and that concept has evolved and shifted in meaning over time.

The French Revolution was a landmark in the emergence of the modern sense of the term. Revolution from then came to be associated with rupture, innovation, and change. Scholars such as William Sewell pinpoint this concept of revolution to July 1789 when contemporaries sought a way to frame the dramatic and disorienting events they were experiencing. Some scholars argue for earlier pedigrees to the modern revolution, in the 1688 Glorious Revolution in England, or in the 1776 American Revolution, but one thing is clear: It is widely held that a distinctively modern kind of revolution emerged at some point in the eighteenth or perhaps seventeenth centuries; that this modern kind of revolution was felt to have something fundamentally to do with rupture, innovation, and change; and that this marked a break with an older sense of the term, which could mean simply a passively experienced turn of events, the coming full circle of events, or a change in fortunes for a state or ruler.

However, associating revolution with rupture, innovation, and change raises its own questions. The notion that the invention of revolution in the seventeenth or eighteenth century marked a break with the past, facilitated by the Enlightenment, is clearly intertwined with broader notions about modernity, and the break with the past that it is held to have represented

around the same time. Indeed, episodes such as the French Revolution are often treated as fundamental to the development of modernity.

These perspectives on the emergence of revolution and modernity suggest a present that is built around regular, dynamic, and expected change, and a past in which it is custom, tradition, and the reproduction of the status quo that are expected, rather than change. A difficulty with this is that it implies a premodern past in which change did not happen.

In Marxist thought, this perspective has been expressed in terms of a withering critique of premodern and preindustrial revolts, associated with peasants acting in defense of a status quo ante, rather than advancing any progressive project.

The notion that modernity heralds an “age of revolutions” and that before this there were only various types of “rebellion” demands interrogation. It also raises a fundamental question about the meaning of revolution itself and about why it is singled out for special treatment from other types of rebellion, revolt, and sedition.

It is not always clear on which bases these distinctions are made. The idea that nothing like revolution ever happened independently of Western modernity is questionable. Anthropologists attest that the roots of many egalitarian peoples lie in revolt and secession from more hierarchical groups, while ancient complex societies from Sumer to Rome were stalked by the specters of popular and slave rebellion. Middle Ages China was racked by almost constant peasant rebellions with some ruling dynasties having their origins in successful ones. If such a wide spectrum of rebellion has been a feature of human civilization for so long, we must ask again about the putative “newness” of revolutions. Some scholars argue that revolutions only became possible with the emergence of the modern state. But this raises questions about how to define the modern state and about how the “stateness” of eighteenth-century France trumps that of Ancient Rome or Middle Ages China.

But although phenomena resembling revolutions may, objectively speaking, have happened before, it is clear that from at least the time of the French Revolution, a newly minted *concept* of revolution provided people with

new ways of thinking about sovereignty, about how political orders are constituted, about change, and of course, about rebellion against the status quo.

Sewell argues that this concept started to emerge after the storming of the Bastille and that an improvised idea of revolution was used to justify this event, while similar acts of violence that followed in its wake were condemned. In fear of the situation in Paris getting out of hand, but unable to condemn the popular attack on the Bastille, members of the assembly declared it an act of revolution—a sovereign act of the people that transcended everyday norms and laws—while declaring other similar acts mere mob violence that threatened to tarnish the revolutionary meaning of the storming of the Bastille.

Theorizing Revolution

Sewell and Doug McAdam argue that the events of 1789 in France gave the world a new “master template” of revolution, which was copied and modified elsewhere and later. From this point of view, the French Revolution provided a recipe for “constitutional revolution,” in which a state is reconstituted around a national assembly that receives its mandate and its political legitimacy from “the people,” in whom sovereignty is held to reside. Subsequent modifications on this master template of constitutional revolution are posited to include the “Bolshevik revolution” variant improvised in Russia, and then modified again in China and various Third World settings; the Islamic revolution variant pioneered in Iran in 1979; and the “people power” variant that emerged in 1989 to founder the Eastern Bloc.

Seen this way, revolution is not just an objective category with a distinctive empirical signature but a phenomenon that is defined as much by how participants conceive of it and experience it subjectively. Others have taken a different approach to conceptualizing revolution, arguing that too many scholars have mingled their theories about how revolutions happen with the stories that revolutionaries tell and that, tautologically, they have built causal statements about revolution into the very definitions of revolution they have used. Alexander J. Motyl suggests that there has been great

confusion over how to conceptualize revolution and whether it is really defined by upheaval, by turmoil, or as he makes the case, by change.

It is hard to deny Motyl's charge that some conceptualizations of revolution have been fuzzy. Scholars routinely distinguish between "political" and "social" revolutions and sometimes between the "great" revolutions (such as in France, Russia, and China) and the rest. But it is surprisingly rare for the distinctions between these concepts to be clearly elaborated.

Furthermore, struggles for national liberation and against colonialism, as well as a host of other types of social and political conflict, are increasingly claimed as types of revolutions, but relatively little attention has been paid to seriously attempting to conceptualize or theorize these categories or to attempting to relate them to relevant existing literatures and theories on nationalist mobilization, anticolonial struggle, and other forms of collective action and political violence that lie outside the specialist literature on revolutions.

Most of the energy of sociologists of revolution has instead gone into developing causal theories of revolution—whether defined as social, political, or otherwise—and into analyses of how revolutionary processes unfold once their causes have put them into motion. A good deal of energy has also gone into debates over rival paradigms of revolutionary theory—the key axis here being, roughly speaking, that between scholars mostly concerned with "structural" and state-centered explanations of revolution, on the one hand, and scholars more interested in the role of "agency" and of culture, on the other.

Within the sociology of revolutions, scholars regularly distinguish between several different generations of revolutionary study since the start of the twentieth century. The first generation, emerging in the 1930s, is often called the "natural history" school. This approach is associated with the drawing of biological and epidemiological analogies in identifying recurring patterns of revolutionary processes rather than with serious causal analysis of why such patterns emerge. This approach has long been seen as outdated, but the work of Crane Brinton is still appreciated for its pioneering commitment to the comparative study of revolutions and to its astute identification of recurring patterns across different cases.

A second generation, more closely tied to the social sciences than the first (many of whose cohort were historians), and with its heyday in the 1960s, is associated with more explicitly causal analysis. Huntington identified revolution with modernization drives; Ted Robert Gurr fingered “relative deprivation” (often compared with Marx’s “immiseration”) as the key to revolution; relatedly, James C. Davies theorized the path to revolution as a “J-curve” along which collective actors respond to economic depression or reversal of fortunes after extended periods of growth and rising standards of living. However, this generation’s causal statements came to be seen as monochrome and unsatisfactory from the point of view of the third generation.

The work of the third-generation scholars, from the late 1960s on, has come to define the study of revolutions ever since, while a much-vaunted “fourth generation” has not yet clearly crystallized. Prominent third-generation pioneers were committed to comparative historical sociological approaches, carried out at a macro level, and emphasizing the decisive role of social structures, from changing economic forces, to state institutions, to the relations between classes.

Barrington Moore argued that particular conjunctures among levels of economic development, integration into world markets, and relative power of social classes—and particularly local bourgeoisies—propelled societies alternatively toward democratic or authoritarian communist or fascist revolutions. Moore’s student, Theda Skocpol, built on this perspective considerably. In her comparison of the “great social revolutions” of France, Russia, and China, she identified the vulnerability of “agrarian bureaucracies” to revolution as they struggled to compete economically and militarily in the interstate system with more developed states. In bringing attention to this international dimension to revolutionary causation, Skocpol traced the repercussions of war and deficit military spending on state finances, and the potential for ensuing fiscal crises to touch off elite conflicts over who would pick up the bill. And although Skocpol sought to highlight the key role of peasants, as well as some urban artisanal groups—rather than a Marxian proletariat—in driving these revolutions, she was careful to point out that peasant discontent does not explain revolution. For although peasant discontent is a constant, revolution happens only rarely.

Revolution in an agrarian bureaucracy is explained, then, by the conditions that allow that constant flow of discontent to break its levees and become revolutionary. This is where elite conflict and the ensuing incapacitation of the establishment and of the state come in.

Skocpol's insistence that revolutions cannot be explained just by looking at revolutionaries, and require attention to institutions and their breakdown, has been highly influential in turning attention toward elite conflict and state crisis in the study of revolutions. The "state-centered approach" that she shaped has gone in several different directions, emphasizing variously the relative autonomy of different states from the interests of social groups; the relative capacity of states to get things done with or without social consent; the political opportunities opened up for revolutionaries in moments of state incapacity; and other aspects of the relationship between state and society.

Although Skocpol focused on revolutions in "agrarian bureaucracies," other statisticians have honed in on the vulnerabilities of other types of states. Focusing on twentieth-century Latin America, Timothy Wickham-Crowley argued that the only successful revolutions there were carried out in isolated "mafias" such as Fulgencio Batista's Cuba and Anastasio Somoza's Nicaragua—corrupt and kleptocratic polities that barely met the criteria of modern states, with thin social bases and weak state infrastructures.

Jeff Goodwin has observed similar patterns of state vulnerability to revolution in "sultanistic" dictatorships in other parts of the twentieth-century Third World, as well as in parts of the Third World where colonial powers chose to rule directly, rather than through the co-optation of local elites. Goodwin pointed out, across both contexts, that if regimes employed exclusionary, indiscriminate, and brutal repressive tactics in the face of political dissent, but lacked "state infrastructures" strong enough to quash such dissent entirely or everywhere, then they were likely to make the radical opposition of revolutionaries seem more plausible than moderate, reformist opposition, and to drive critical masses of terrorized people into support for the revolutionaries.

Jack Goldstone built on Skocpol's structuralist approach to revolution in a different direction. Surveying several hundred years of history, Goldstone

argued that demographic factors have been key to revolutionary causation. Goldstone identified two great waves of revolution in Eurasian history since the Middle Ages, both coinciding with significant waves of demographic growth: one from about 1580 to 1650 and another from about 1770 to 1870. Goldstone argued that demographic increases can fuel social conflict when both elite and nonelite elements find themselves competing over economic resources and opportunities that fail to grow at the same pace as demographic increases—a “shrinking pie” problem. Goldstone also argues for the salience of this perspective in the context of the dramatic demographic growth seen in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

Scholars such as Goldstone and Goodwin have acknowledged the need to integrate broadly structuralist perspectives such as their own with approaches to revolution concerned with the roles of agency and culture. William Sewell, Eric Selbin, Lynn Hunt, and Forrest Colburn have been among the scholars associated with such approaches and are sometimes referred to as the “French cultural school” for the association of their work with studies of the French Revolution and of the role of specific ideas and ideologies in shaping various revolutions.

All have been criticized by structuralists for the purported shortcomings of their work. Wickham-Crowley has suggested that explaining individual revolutions on the basis of local peculiarities of culture or agency is a retreat to national exceptionalism and an exit from the social scientific project of developing generalizable theory.

However, at least one member of the French cultural school—Sewell—has engaged directly with the debate about structure and agency long running in social theory and has, to a large degree, designed his theoretical approach to revolution as a way of integrating the two perspectives. Taking off from Fernand Braudel’s famous distinction between the *longue durée* (the temporality of the long-term and of slow-to-change social structures) and of *histoire événementielle* (the temporality of everyday turns of events), Sewell posits dramatic and highly contingent events like the storming of the Bastille in July 1789 as moments in which the membranes between these long-run and short-run temporalities rupture—when old certainties are

toppled by infectious outbursts of popular agency and by the pace of events, and the structures of everyday life are changed rapidly as a result.

Other scholars of revolution have also attempted to integrate perspectives on structure and agency. Goldstone, Wickham-Crowley, and John Foran have all attempted to find a place for cultural factors—such as the presence of a popular rebellious culture—within multicausal models of revolutionary causation that, otherwise, are basically structural.

These attempts to push forward revolutionary theory have not clearly birthed a distinctive fourth-generation perspective in the sociology of revolutions. But salient theoretical developments are now occurring on the boundaries between the sociology of revolutions and related fields such as the sociology of social movements.

Although the boundaries between such fields have always been porous to some degree, since the late 1990s, the calls to bridge them have been growing in volume. In the background has been concern that fragmentation in the social sciences has led to duplication and overlap, as scholars tried to explain similar problems from different vantage points without meaningful dialogue across these. McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly's 2001 coinage "contentious politics" is now often used as an umbrella term for everything from social movements, to ethnic conflict, to revolution, implying that similar dynamics and "mechanisms" can be found in all these cases.

Some recent theoretical developments coming from this blurred zone could have implications for the debate about structure and agency in revolutions. Attempts to move on from structuralism have led some scholars to turn their focus to strategic action or strategic interaction. These approaches to contentious politics place as much emphasis on the agency of "challengers" in *creating* opportunities for themselves as it does on those challengers' ability to take advantage of opportunities that appear thanks to structures beyond their control. Such approaches emphasize the contingent nature of these processes, positing that outcomes in contentious politics can rarely be predicted because so much depends on the interplay of different political actors and since one strategic or tactical move necessarily shapes its response.

This framework would raise difficult questions for the study of revolutions. More structuralist revolution scholars have often suggested that, if agency and contingency have a role in revolutionary analysis, it is more in explaining the twists and turns of postrevolutionary trajectories than revolutionary causation. Many scholars have also suggested that the only revolutions worth studying are ones that are “successful.” This criterion has been explicitly built into many definitions of revolution—the implication being that successful revolutions, on the one hand, and “attempted” or “failed” revolutions, on the other, are of entirely different species, requiring different tools of analysis. (In contrast, whereas a revolution is often only considered to be a revolution if it is successful, a social movement is considered to be a social movement whether it fails or succeeds.)

A strategic action or strategic interaction perspective would compromise this approach to revolution in that it would see revolutionary success as contingent on the choices and stratagems of challengers and incumbents—*not* as predetermined by the largely structural circumstances to be found at the episode’s outset. This would imply that rather than being its own essential category, revolution is only separated from attempted or failed revolution by a fine line. Taken to its logical conclusion, this line of reasoning could easily suggest that the lines between revolutionary movements and other social movements are potentially just as fine.

Revolution Today

Beyond purely intellectual vagaries, recent real-world events have raised their own difficult questions for the study of revolutions.

The events of 1989 presented an awkward case for revolution specialists in that the popular uprisings that toppled regimes across the Eastern Bloc looked much like revolutions but fitted idiosyncratically with theories about how revolution comes about. The states affected were neither agrarian bureaucracies, nor colonies subjected to direct imperial rule, nor (in most cases at least) sultanistic or mafiacratic dictatorships. Preexisting cultures of opposition had seemed weak, the states had seemed strong and stable, and when the uprisings came, they were (mostly) remarkably peaceful but managed to upend regimes anyway. Targeted as they were against

nominally revolutionary states—something, again, without much obvious precedent—these uprisings were associated as much with the discourse of reform as of revolution.

These uprisings also ended the Cold War, which had major implications for would-be revolutionary projects everywhere. By the start of the twenty-first century, scholars of revolution were seriously debating whether revolutions had a future. Beyond the academy, many on the political left assumed that, with a globalized capitalism now more dominant than ever, older ideas about revolution in the sense of taking power to transform a given nation-state were now redundant, and that the concept of revolution would have to be re-thought.

In the 2000s, certain events brought revolution back on the agenda. The color revolutions in postsocialist states such as Serbia, Ukraine, and Georgia led some scholars to compare them as “nonviolent” or “people power” revolutions, to the Iranian Revolution, the mid-1980s Filipino Yellow Revolution, and the events of 1989, and to suggest that they marked a new departure from many of the forms of previous revolutions. And in 2011, the events of the Arab Spring put the word “revolution” back in the zeitgeist even more dramatically.

However, it is at least questionable whether any of these purported twentieth-century revolutions meet the criteria of classic definitions of revolution, whatever their form. Some have achieved negotiated democratizing reforms rather than state overthrow, while some have depended on high levels of outside intervention and militarization to achieve state overthrow. Events in the Arab world continue to unfold, but it may be the case that rather than being explicable simply in terms of evolution in revolutionary forms, they reiterate the unresolved questions raised around the turn of the millennium about the future of revolutions in the twenty-first century as well as deeper questions about how to define and conceptualize revolutions.

Donagh Davis

See also [American Political Thought](#); [Anarchism](#); [Arendt, Hannah](#); [Class](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Empire and Political Thought](#);

[French Revolution](#), [Political Thought of the](#); [Gramsci, Antonio](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Negri, Antonio](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Power](#); [Progress](#); [Rights, Civil](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Rule of Law](#); [Russian Revolution](#), [Political Thought of the](#); [Socialism](#); Sovereignty, Political; [Totalitarianism](#); [Utopianism](#)

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Stephen C. Thomas Stephen C. Thomas

Rights, Civil

Rights, civil

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Rights, Civil

A civil right is an enforceable right or privilege, which if interfered with by another gives rise to an action for injury. Examples of civil rights are freedom of speech, press, and assembly; the right to vote; freedom from involuntary servitude; and the right to equality in public places. Discrimination occurs when the civil rights of an individual are denied or interfered with because of their membership in a particular group or class.

—Cornell University Law School, Legal Information Institute
(<http://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/civilrights>)

In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* triggered the eventual integration of America's schools, and, particularly during the 1960s and 1970s, there was dramatic civil rights progress in the United States for groups of Americans who had experienced generations of discrimination, including unequal legal rights and unequal access to society's jobs, housing, and services. In a growing flood of mass movements, aggrieved groups marched for voting rights, for equal rights in schools, and for political empowerment. The efforts of African Americans, Hispanics, Indigenous peoples, women, disabled Americans, and gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) peoples led to advances in civil rights. Civil rights organizations in the United States—such as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, founded by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.—

were much in the public eye during this period. Other groups fighting discrimination also organized civil rights movements, and most achieved unprecedented progress in the social and legal recognition of their respective civil rights. The only group that did not achieve much progress was labor, which saw its rights slowly diminish in the decades after World War II.

Although many civil rights have not been fully won, the years since 1954 have been more oriented toward civil rights than any other period in American history, culminating in the 2008 election of an African American president of the United States. This entry traces the development of the post-1954 African American Civil Rights Movement, then describes the other civil rights movements that took place during this period, and finally offers some observations on the linkages between civil rights movements in American society.

The African American Civil Rights Movement

After President Abraham Lincoln's 1863 Emancipation Proclamation freed African American slaves in most Southern states, the next major challenge for freed slaves ("freedmen") was to gain full civil rights, including voting as well as equal treatment in employment, housing, accommodations, and education. Although freedmen gained these rights from 1865 to 1876 through the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution and five civil rights bills passed before 1875, the U.S. Congress began to retreat on civil rights for African Americans beginning in 1877.

In 1877, the Supreme Court invalidated the five civil rights laws. Thereafter few African Americans in the South could vote, and political power gradually returned to Whites in most Southern state and local political offices. The Supreme Court's 1896 ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson* legitimized the segregation practices initiated in the South over the previous 20 years and provided an impetus for further segregation laws. African American rights won through legislation during the Reconstruction Era (1865-76) were erased by means of the "separate but equal" doctrine articulated in *Plessy*, which formalized segregation and legalized discrimination in the South. Southern states passed so-called separate but equal laws, later called

Jim Crow laws, that mandated segregation in education, housing, transportation, and services. Jim Crow laws also deprived African Americans in Southern states of most of their civil rights, including the right to vote and to serve on juries, and thus prevented them from enjoying equal treatment in the courts. They also could no longer redress their grievances through serving in local, state, or national government.

White Southern Democrats, called Dixiecrats, came to power in the South after 1876, and vehemently opposed the reestablishment of African American voting and other basic civil rights that might have given the large African American populations of many southern states local and regional political power. Instead, African Americans faced not only discrimination but acts of terror throughout the South. White citizens' groups, such as the Ku Klux Klan and White Citizens' Councils, carried out lynchings and other terrorist acts. Southern elected officials successfully blocked all state legislation against lynching, and no federal anti-lynching legislation was passed until it was criminalized under the Civil Rights Act of 1968.

The period between *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896 and *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 also saw Northern state government takeovers by the Ku Klux Klan, such as in Colorado and Indiana in the 1920s. Anti-Black race riots occurred in cities in both the South (including Atlanta, Georgia, in 1906, and Rosewood, Florida, in 1923) and the North (including those in Springfield, Illinois, in 1908; Chicago, Illinois, 1919; Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1921; and Detroit, Michigan, 1943).

World War II brought African Americans more into the mainstream with the creation of segregated military units such as the Tuskegee Airmen, who were given more responsibility as the war wore on although the armed forces remained segregated. By the end of the war, African American servicemen had shown their patriotism and valor, as they had done in World War I, and were asking for full and equal civil rights and for integration in residential, work, and other social contexts.

President Harry Truman integrated the U.S. Army just before the 1948 election, opening the door to equal treatment of African Americans in other areas of American life. Still, full legal equality, both in the political world and in civil society generally, was not yet possible. African Americans

could join only a handful of unions (such as the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters), were kept from voting throughout the South, and were discriminated against in schools, jobs, housing, and services such as restaurants, theaters, and lodging. Although African Americans could vote in the North, they still had not achieved equal civil rights in almost all other areas, for both legal and de facto reasons.

Despite lack of legal protections in Southern courts and facing acts of terrorism by White racists in the South, African Americans began to form organizations against lynching and for civil rights beginning in the years following *Plessy v. Ferguson*. The best known are the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP, 1909); the Urban League (1910); Pan-African Congresses, (organized by W. E. B. Du Bois, beginning in 1919); and religious organizations. The only African American union, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, was founded by A. Philip Randolph in 1925.

In the wake of World War II, President Truman in 1948 took the courageous step of opposing the Dixiecrats, including Southern congressmen and U.S. senators, and calling for the integration of the armed forces. The Dixiecrats walked out of the 1948 Democratic nominating convention, but Truman won the Democratic nomination and an unexpected victory over Republican candidate Thomas Dewey with the help of African American voters in the North.

With the momentum building for civil rights for African Americans, the growth of a worldwide human rights agenda through the newly formed United Nations, and the 1948 passing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the NAACP began careful preparation of a legal case to challenge the 55-year-old doctrine of “separate but equal” first legitimized by the Supreme Court in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). A legal team led by Thurgood Marshall (who later became the first African American appointed to the Supreme Court) argued that separate was inherently unequal and amounted to discrimination and unequal treatment based solely on race. In 1954, the Supreme Court agreed in *Brown v. Board of Education*, and the U.S. then began school integration.

After 1954, although school integration had become the law of the land, the Southern states still resisted both school integration and integration of all other political, economic, and social facilities. Segregation in the South remained, supported by the Jim Crow laws. The question for African American leaders was how to move civil rights forward. The next 11 years saw civil rights movements on many fronts throughout the South and in parts of the North, with the members of the African American Civil Rights Movement providing leadership to spearhead desegregation efforts.

One of the first civil rights actions was aimed at making city buses in Montgomery, Alabama, available on equal terms to African Americans. In Montgomery, as in many other Southern cities, African Americans were a major part of the bus ridership but were treated unequally, being required by law to sit in the back of the buses and to give up their seats if asked by a White person. The Montgomery bus boycott of 1955–56 was one of the first civil rights campaigns to use Gandhian nonviolent resistance techniques to carry out a boycott. As the boycott commenced, a young Baptist minister, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., was selected as the leader. He led the Montgomery boycott for over a year, and its success propelled him to national prominence. Nine years after Montgomery, his leadership helped bring about the historic 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act. In 1964, Dr. King won the Nobel Peace Prize for his civil rights work. He then continued to carry out civil rights campaigns until his assassination in 1968 while organizing and demonstrating for sanitation workers in Memphis, Tennessee.

Other African American civil rights campaigns included the 1960 lunch-counter sit-ins organized by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the 1961 Freedom Rides organized by the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). There also were campaigns for African American voter registration such as the 1964 Freedom Summer.

Toward the end of his life, Dr. King began to challenge racism and discrimination in the North, such as in Chicago, and to point out the economic inequalities suffered by many African Americans in the South, such as sanitation workers in Memphis. He also began to speak out against

the Vietnam War. He participated in and helped to plan the March on Washington in 1963, where he made his historic “I Have a Dream” speech.

Other Civil Rights Movements

The African American Civil Rights Movement helped to stimulate other civil rights movements, including those working for women’s liberation; Indigenous peoples’ civil rights; Chicano civil rights; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights; and the rights of people with disabilities. Direct action techniques from the Civil Rights Movement were also adopted by the anti-Vietnam War movement.

The women’s movement began with the Seneca Falls Declaration of 1848, calling for suffrage, and moved slowly forward until the ratification in 1920 of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, giving women the vote throughout the United States. The second wave of the movement for women’s rights was kicked off in 1963 by the publication of Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique*. In 1966, the National Organization for Women (NOW) was formed, and its advocacy helped bring about the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision establishing a woman’s right to have an abortion. The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) passed both houses of Congress in 1972 and was sent to the states for ratification, but it narrowly failed to win the necessary three-quarters of the states. Title IX of the Equal Education Opportunities Act of 1972 prohibited discrimination on the basis of sex in any federally funded educational activity or program. Under Title IX, participation by girls and women in sports programs increased dramatically. Title IX also increased the opportunities for women in all academic fields and disciplines and in leadership positions at universities, in the business world, and in governmental service. Title X of the 1970 Public Health Service Act provided funding for family planning. Current women’s rights issues include efforts to restart the ERA and to address the continuing disparity between men and women’s wages; in 2012, women received about 79 cents for every \$1 received by men.

Because women now constitute a majority of U.S. voters, they have become a major political force and may well develop a third-generation women’s civil-rights movement.

American Indigenous peoples have carried out a long and difficult struggle to gain recognition of their rights to human dignity, political equality, and sovereignty. Native Americans were not made citizens until 1924, and, as late as the 1930s, they were often forced to send their children to government-run boarding schools, the children were punished for using their native languages, and they were often abused by administrators. A major Native American civil rights group is the American Indian Movement (AIM), founded in 1968 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, by Dennis Banks and other urban Native Americans. Russell Means, an Oglala Lakota, was a leader in 1970s protests led by AIM. The organization addressed a number of issues facing Indigenous peoples, including poverty, housing, treaty enforcement, and police harassment. In October 1971, AIM members from across the country went to Washington, DC, for a protest known as the "Trail of Broken Treaties." AIM gained national recognition when it occupied the Bureau of Indian Affairs national headquarters and presented its demands to the federal government. In 1973, AIM led an armed standoff with federal forces at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. AIM continues to advocate for Indigenous people's civil rights and sovereignty. One such activity has been the anti-Columbus Day campaigns in Denver, Colorado, led by Dr. Glenn Morris and others.

The first gay rights organization was started by a small group of gay men who created the Mattachine Society in 1951. The Stonewall Riots of 1969 in New York City are often regarded as the start of the gay rights movement. When the New York Police raided a gay bar in Greenwich Village and started arresting employees and drag performers, a crowd of some 2,000 gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender supporters challenged the police. A year later, GLBT activists in major cities, including New York, held a parade to commemorate the confrontation. Gay Pride parades have been held in June ever since. The GLBT community has continued to struggle for many civil rights, including equal employment, non-discrimination, and same-sex marriages. On June 26, 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the federal Defense of Marriage Act, ruling that married same-sex couples were entitled to federal benefits. The Court also declined to hear a case in which proponents of California's Proposition 8 had sought to overturn a trial court's ruling against the initiative. However, the Court did not hold that same-sex couples have a constitutional

right to marry; thus, the decision whether to allow same-sex marriage remains with the states, and the issue continues to be a focus of the LGBT movement.

Hispanic civil rights advocates organized movements for two types of groups. First there were Hispanic, mostly Mexican, field workers, who formed the United Farm Workers in 1962 under the leadership of César Chávez and Dolores Huerta. After a very long strike against lettuce growers, grape growers, and wine companies such as Gallo, the United Farm Workers finally won a major victory in 1970, gaining better wages, working conditions, and benefits for California farm workers. Hispanics also organized Chicano consciousness-raising groups in many cities, particularly in the southwestern United States. In Denver, Colorado, the Crusade for Justice was formed and led by Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales. The Crusade marched and worked for equal rights for Hispanics in Denver. There were similar Hispanic civil rights campaigns in other parts of the western United States.

Recognition of civil rights for the disabled was gained as a result of a movement to grant civil rights for disabled Americans. Their efforts succeeded with the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which extended the civil rights that had been accorded to the other groups mentioned above in the 1964 Civil Rights Act. In an important sense, this recent civil rights movement is the most comprehensive, because unlike the case with race or gender, anyone can become disabled.

As Paul Gordon Lauren has argued, major events such as wars have often triggered advances in human rights, including civil rights. World War II and then the anti-Vietnam War movement seemed to have had that consequence in the United States. There also is often cross-pollination between various civil rights movements. In the 19th century, abolitionist leaders included women who went on to start the woman’s suffrage movement. In the case of the civil rights movements, Dr. King spoke out against the Vietnam War, and many activists from other civil rights movements participated in the African American civil rights movement.

Civil Rights Movements and Political Thought

Civil rights movement theorists, such as Aldon Morris, have also argued that the tremendous successes of the African American civil rights movement, particularly between 1955 and 1965, have led political theorists to rethink how successful political movements develop. Morris has argued that mass-based political movements can arise due to many factors: the successful mobilization of mass groups, giving them agency that they theretofore had never known they had; the power and success of Dr. King's application of nonviolent direct-action techniques as well as his charismatic leadership; the newly important role of mass media, particularly television, in shaping U.S. public opinion; the emerging power of international public opinion, particularly in Africa, during the U.S.-Soviet Cold War; and, finally, the growing financial, political, and voting power of African Americans in the northern United States, millions of whom had migrated north before and during World War II.

Morris also argues that later civil rights movements learned from the techniques of mass mobilization and nonviolent direct action used in the African American Civil Rights Movement, and during the 10 years after 1965, were remarkably successful in achieving their goals by applying these methods. He sees the African American civil rights movement from 1954 to 1965 as a model and an inspiration to movements addressing gender, race/ethnicity, sexuality, and the rights of persons with disabilities. Forms of nonviolent direct action, such as sit-ins, Freedom Rides, marches, and various demonstrations, were modeled on those of Mahatma Gandhi and applied Gandhian techniques to African American civil rights movements of the late 1950s and early 1960s. Without the techniques developed during these movements and the inspiration of their successes, it is hard to imagine the successes that the many other civil rights movements subsequently achieved after 1965.

The era of mass civil rights activism is over for now, but it has led to major improvements in the civil rights of African Americans, Indigenous peoples, women, Hispanics, the disabled, and the GLBT community. Although progress often entailed significant human costs, and some progress has been lost, the current high levels of civil rights for these historically oppressed populations would have seemed inconceivable 50 years ago.

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See also [Affirmative Action](#); [Civil Disobedience](#); [Equality and Egalitarianism](#); [King, Martin Luther, Jr.](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#)

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Rights, Natural and Human

Rights, natural and human

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Rights, Natural and Human

Talk of human rights is widespread. For some commentators, the post–Cold War world is, or should be, characterized by the predominance of human rights as the key criterion for determining the legal, political, and moral legitimacy of those who hold and wield power. Although the term may be familiar to many, the precise meaning of the concept of human rights is often assumed rather than clearly spelled out. Often references to rights will imply or directly draw on the International Bill of Human Rights, which comprises the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. Taken together, these three documents provide the basis for a comprehensive and elaborate framework of rights that cover and seek to regulate fundamental aspects of human life. However, such statements of human rights do not serve to define the concept but merely identify and enumerate what may be thought of as legitimately belonging to the category of human rights in the first place.

An ever expanding academic literature of human rights contains numerous definitions from the simple and logical references to human rights being what humans are due as humans to less simple but more substantively comprehensive formulations. The philosopher James Nickel provides a particularly clear and comprehensive definition of human rights when he states that human rights are:

basic moral guarantees that people in all countries and cultures allegedly have simply because they are people. Calling these guarantees “rights” suggests that they attach to particular individuals who can invoke them, that they are of high priority, and that compliance with them is mandatory rather than discretionary. Human rights are frequently held to be universal in the sense that all people have and should enjoy them, and to be independent in the sense that they exist and are available as standards of justification and criticism whether or not they are recognized and implemented by the legal system or officials of a country. (Nickel 1987, 561–62)

Human rights aim to identify both the necessary negative and positive prerequisites for leading a minimally good life, such as rights against torture and rights to health care and access to clean drinking water. To possess a human right is to possess an entitlement to enjoy access to certain fundamental goods and to be free from forms of external impediments or interference that compromise one’s potential to secure the conditions for a minimally good life. Definitions of concepts typically serve to orient us toward achieving a better understanding of something but cannot, by themselves, provide a sufficiently detailed account of the concept in question, particularly in the case of human rights. Securing a detailed understanding of this ubiquitous but amorphous term requires an analysis of the historical development of human rights and a discussion of key contemporary debates concerning the basis and scope of the legitimate application of human rights within a complex world.

Historical Development

The doctrine of human rights rests on a fundamental philosophical claim: that there exists a rationally identifiable moral order, an order whose legitimacy precedes contingent social and historical conditions and applies to all human beings everywhere and at all times. With this view, moral beliefs and concepts are capable of being objectively validated as fundamentally and universally true. The contemporary doctrine of human rights is one of a number of universalist moral perspectives. The history of the philosophical development of human rights is punctuated by a number

of specific moral doctrines that, although not themselves full and adequate expressions of human rights, have nevertheless provided a number of philosophical prerequisites for the contemporary doctrine. These include a view of morality and justice as emanating from some presocial domain, the identification of which provides the basis for distinguishing between “true” and merely “conventional” moral principles and beliefs. The essential prerequisites for a defense of human rights also include a conception of the individual as the bearer of certain “natural” rights and a particular view of the inherent and equal moral worth of each rational individual. Each needs to be discussed in turn.

Moral universalism posits the existence of rationally identifiable, transcultural and transhistorical moral truths. The origins of moral universalism within Europe are typically associated with the writings of Aristotle and the Stoics. Thus, in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle unambiguously expounds an argument in support of the existence of a natural moral order. This natural order should provide the basis for all truly rational systems of justice. An appeal to the natural order provides a set of comprehensive and potentially universal criteria for evaluating the legitimacy of actual “human-made” legal systems. In distinguishing between “natural justice” and “legal justice,” Aristotle writes, “the natural is that which has the same validity everywhere and does not depend upon acceptance” (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 189). Thus, the criteria for determining a truly rational system of justice preexist social and historical conventions. Natural justice preexists specific social and political configurations. The means for determining the form and content of natural justice is the exercise of reason free from the distorting effects of mere prejudice or desire. This idea was similarly expressed by the Roman Stoics, such as Cicero and Seneca, who argued that morality originated in the rational will of God and the existence of a cosmic city from which one could discern a natural, moral law whose authority transcended all local legal codes. The Stoics argued that this ethically universal code imposed on all of us a duty to obey the will of God. The Stoics thereby posited the existence of a universal moral community secured through our shared relationship with God. The belief in the existence of a universal moral community was maintained in Europe by Christianity over the ensuing centuries. Although some have discerned intimations toward the notion of rights in the writings of

Aristotle, the Stoics, and Christian theologians, a concept of rights approximating that of the contemporary idea of human rights most clearly emerges during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Europe and the so-called doctrine of natural law.

The basis of the doctrine of natural law is the belief in the existence of a natural moral code based on the identification of certain fundamental and objectively verifiable human goods. Our enjoyment of these basic goods is to be secured by our possession of equally fundamental and objectively verifiable natural rights. Natural law was deemed to preexist actual social and political systems. Natural rights were thereby similarly presented as rights individuals possessed independently of society or polity. Natural rights were presented as ultimately valid irrespective of whether they had achieved the recognition of any given political ruler or assembly. The quintessential exponent of this position was the seventeenth-century philosopher John Locke and, in particular, the argument he outlined in his *Two Treatises of Government* (1688). At the center of Locke's argument is the claim that individuals possess natural rights, independently of the political recognition granted them by the state. These natural rights are possessed independently of, and prior to, the formation of any political community. Locke argued that natural rights flowed from natural law. Natural law originated from God. Accurately discerning the will of God provided us with an ultimately authoritative moral code. At root, each of us owes a duty of self-preservation to God. To discharge this duty of self-preservation successfully, each individual had to be free from threats to life and liberty, while requiring what Locke presented as the basic, positive means for self-preservation: personal property. Our duty of self-preservation to God entailed the necessary existence of basic natural rights to life, liberty, and property. Locke proceeded to argue that the principal purpose of the investiture of political authority in a sovereign state was the provision and protection of individuals' basic natural rights. For Locke, the protection and promotion of individuals' natural rights were the sole justification for the creation of government. The natural rights to life, liberty, and property set clear limits to the authority and jurisdiction of the state. States were presented as existing to serve the interests, the natural rights, of the people, and not of a monarch or a ruling cadre. Locke went so far as to argue that individuals are morally justified in taking up arms

against their government should it systematically and deliberately fail in its duty to secure individuals' possession of natural rights.

Analyses of the historical predecessors of the contemporary theory of human rights typically accord a high degree of importance to Locke's contribution. Locke provided the precedent of establishing legitimate political authority upon a rights foundation. This stance is an undeniably essential component of human rights. However, the philosophically adequate completion or theoretical basis of human rights requires an account of moral reasoning that is consistent with the concept of rights but that does not necessarily require an appeal to the authority of some super-human entity in justifying human beings' claims to certain fundamental rights. Such an account may be found in the work of the eighteenth-century German philosopher Immanuel Kant.

Many of the central themes first expressed within Kant's moral philosophy remain highly prominent in contemporary philosophical justifications of human rights. Foremost among these are the ideals of equality and the moral autonomy of rational human beings. Kant bestows on contemporary human-rights theory the ideal of a potentially universal community of rational individuals autonomously determining the moral principles for securing the conditions for equality and autonomy. Kant provides a means of justifying human rights as the basis for self-determination grounded within the authority of human reason. Kant's moral philosophy is based on an appeal to the formal principles of ethics rather than, for example, an appeal to a concept of substantive human goods. For Kant, the determination of any such goods can proceed only from a correct determination of the formal properties of human reason and thus do not provide the ultimate means for determining the correct ends, or object, of human reason. Kant's moral philosophy begins with an attempt to identify correctly those principles of reasoning that can be applied equally to all rational persons, irrespective of their own specific desires or partial interests. In this way, Kant attaches a condition of universality to the correct identification of moral principles. For him, moral reasoning must rest on a condition to which all rational individuals are bound to assent. Doing the right thing is thus not determined by acting in pursuit of one's own interests or desires but by acting in accordance with a maxim that all rational

individuals are bound to accept. Kant terms this the categorical imperative, which he formulates in the following terms, “act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law” (1948, 84). Kant argues that this basic condition of universality in determining the moral principles for governing human relations is a necessary expression of the moral autonomy and fundamental equality of all rational individuals. The categorical imperative is self-imposed by morally autonomous and formally equal rational persons. It provides the basis for determining the scope and form of those laws that morally autonomous and equally rational individuals will institute to secure these same conditions. For Kant, the capacity for the exercise of reason is the distinguishing characteristic of humanity and the basis for justifying human dignity. As the distinguishing characteristic of humanity, formulating the principles of the exercise of reason must necessarily satisfy a test of universality; they must be capable of being universally recognized by all equally rational agents. Kant’s moral philosophy is notoriously abstract and resists easy comprehension. Although often overlooked in accounts of the historical development of human rights, his contribution to human rights has been profound. Kant provides a formulation of fundamental moral principles that, although exceedingly formal and abstract, are based on the twin ideals of equality and moral autonomy. Human rights are rights we give to ourselves, so to speak, as autonomous and formally equal beings. For Kant, any such rights originate in the formal properties of human reason, and not the will of some super-human being.

The philosophical ideas defended by the likes of Locke and Kant have come to be associated with the general Enlightenment of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the effects of which were to extend across the globe and over ensuing centuries. Ideals such as natural rights, moral autonomy, human dignity, and equality provided a normative bedrock for attempts to reconstitute political systems, for overthrowing formerly despotic regimes and seeking to replace them with forms of political authority capable of protecting and promoting these new emancipatory ideals. These ideals effected significant, even revolutionary, political upheavals throughout the eighteenth century, enshrined in such documents as the U.S.’s Declaration of Independence and the French National Assembly’s Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen. Similarly, the

concept of individual rights continued to resound throughout the nineteenth century, as exemplified by Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* and other political movements to extend political suffrage to sections of society that had been denied political and civil rights. The concept of rights had become a vehicle for effecting political change. This historical process eventually came to fruition in the establishment of an international human rights regime, enshrined by the International Bill of Human Rights, and the widespread appeal to human rights by oppressed and subjugated peoples across the world today.

The modern doctrine of human rights is deeply indebted to the earlier concept of natural rights and the doctrine of natural law. However, Nickel (1987, 8–10) identifies three specific ways in which the contemporary concept of human rights differs from, and goes beyond, its predecessor of natural rights. First, contemporary human rights are argued to require positive action by the state, via the provision of welfare assistance, for example. Advocates of natural rights, he argues, were far more inclined to view equality in formalistic terms, as principally requiring the state to refrain from interfering in individuals' lives. Second, whereas advocates of natural rights tended to conceive of human beings as mere individuals, veritable "islands unto themselves," advocates of contemporary human rights are far more willing to recognize the importance of family and community in individuals' lives. Third, Nickel views contemporary human rights as being far more internationalist in scope and orientation than was typically found within arguments in support of natural rights. The protection and promotion of human rights are now increasingly seen as requiring international action and concern.

The distinction drawn by Nickel between contemporary human rights and traditional natural rights allows one to discern the development of the concept of human rights. Indeed, many writers on human rights agree in the identification of three generations of human rights. First-generation rights consist primarily of rights to security, property, and political participation. These are most typically associated with the French and U.S. declarations. Second-generation rights are construed as socioeconomic rights, rights to welfare, education, and leisure, for example. These rights largely originate within the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The final and third

generation is associated with such rights as a right to national self-determination, the right to a clean environment, and the rights of indigenous minorities. This generation of rights only recently took hold during the last two decades of the twentieth century but represents a significant development within the doctrine of human rights generally.

Contemporary Relevance and Ongoing Debates

Talk of human rights has thus become widespread. In part, this development reflects the continuing influence and appeal of the doctrine. However, it also testifies to the continuing abuse and violation of human rights across the world today: Although human rights apply to all human beings, not all human beings respect human rights. The systematic and continuing violation of human rights has many complex causes, which are beyond the scope of this article. The concept of human rights and the assumptions it rests on have been subject to academic criticism. Human-rights skepticism is not the exclusive preserve of despotic leaders and elites who may perceive themselves as having little to gain and everything to lose from protecting and promoting human rights. Within the academic sphere there is one recurring area of critical debate: the question of universal validity of human rights and a correlative concern that human rights may sometimes take on a culturally imperialist complexion.

Moral universalism is central to human rights. As moral principles and as a moral doctrine, human rights are considered by proponents to be universally valid. However, moral universalism has long been subject to criticism by moral relativists, who argue that universally valid moral truths simply do not exist. Relativists view morality as a social and historical—indeed even a personal—phenomenon. Moral beliefs and principles are therefore thought of as conditionally contingent, valid only for those cultures and societies in which they originate and within which they are widely approved. In the extreme form, moral relativism means that right and wrong are whatever each of us says they are. Relativists point to the vast array of diverse moral beliefs and practices apparent in the world today as empirical support for their position. Even within a single society, such as the United States or Great Britain today, there exists a wide diversity of fundamental moral beliefs, principles, and practices. Contemporary, complex societies are thus

increasingly considered to be pluralist and multicultural in character. For many philosophers, the multicultural character of such societies serves to restrict the substance and scope of the regulative political principles governing them. In respect of human rights, relativists have tended to focus on such issues as the presumed individualist character of the doctrine of human rights. It has been argued by numerous relativists that human rights are unduly biased toward morally individualist societies and cultures, at the necessary expense of the communal moral complexion of many Asian and African societies. Allegedly universal human rights can thus become the basis for imposing and perpetuating a form of cultural and moral imperialism.

The philosophical debate between universalists and relativists is far too complex to exhaust here. However, certain immediate responses to the relativist critique of human rights are available. First, merely pointing to moral diversity and the presumed integrity of individual cultures and societies does not, by itself, provide a philosophical justification for relativism, nor a sufficient critique of universalism. After all, there have existed and continue to exist many cultures and societies whose treatment of their own people leaves much to be desired. Is the relativist genuinely asking us to recognize and respect the integrity of Nazi Germany, or any other demonstrably repressive regime? There can be little doubt that, as it stands, relativism is incompatible with human rights and arguably with an innate human desire not to be abused. Would relativists willingly forgo their own rights if society demanded it? Relativist arguments are typically presented by members of the political elites within those countries whose systematic oppression of their peoples has attracted the attention of advocates of human rights. The exponential growth of grassroots human-rights organizations across many countries whose cultures are alleged to be incompatible with the implementation of human rights raises serious questions of the validity and integrity of such indigenous relativists. Although oppressive rulers argue relativity to the world, they hardly do so to their own peoples, who are reprehended and punished for violating the rulers' own concepts of right and wrong.

Nonetheless, specific ethnic groups' and communities' concerns over the incompatibility between global human rights and their own communal

moral systems have a degree of plausibility. Claims of the universality of a right are at least contestable, and the leaders of some countries have clearly used their own favored concepts to oppress other countries or groups, including indigenous peoples whose cultures are regarded as “barbaric” by settler societies. Moreover, the Western origin of the concept of human rights has given it its individualistic rather than communal basis and bias. By contrast, the so-called third generation of human rights is far more attuned to the communal and collective basis of many individuals’ lives. In keeping with the work of political philosophers such as Will Kymlicka, human-rights principles have come to be tailored increasingly to such things as the collective rights of minorities and to these minorities’ claims to communal rights such as land, language, and culture. Although human rights remain philosophically grounded mostly within an individualist moral doctrine, attempts are increasing to extend them to a more communal perspective.

The relativist critique of human rights can thus help protect against the perpetration of cultural intolerance in the name of advancing international human rights. All of the societies of the world do not comply, nor need they comply, with a single substantive moral outlook. To the degree that the world fails to reach consensus on certain arguably universal norms, there can be room for respecting cross-cultural differences in fundamental practices, traditions, and beliefs. In areas of controversy, respectful dialogue offers an alternative to simple condemnation of alternative viewpoints. In recent decades, many advocates of human rights have become more culturally sensitive and more readily espouse a form of moral pluralism within the parameters of human rights. This process has also greatly benefited from many of those directly affected by human rights abuses taking a more active role in combating these abuses while remaining true to their own cultural ways of being, which may well differ from those found within European and North American societies. The essence of human rights militates against their being claimed by any single society or civilization.

Human rights belong to us all. Despite the importance of respecting cultural diversity, in some cases, a commitment to respecting human rights requires drawing a moral line in the sand. Some practices are intolerable regardless

of how much support they may enjoy within a given society. Identifying where this line is to be drawn entails a commitment to the ideals of liberty, equality, and a fundamental respect for human dignity. The precise meaning and legitimate application of these ideals are continuing areas of intellectual and moral debate. Given the extent to which countless millions of peoples' human rights are systematically violated, it is vitally important that such debate not obscure recognition of some moral certainties, for instance, the prevention of torture and of violence against the innocent. Ultimately, an insistence on securing the conditions for each human being to lead a minimally good life, free from the threat of systematic and significant suffering, seems an appropriate and reasonable certainty for an otherwise complex and uncertain world.

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See also [Affirmative Action](#); [Animal Rights](#); [Autonomy](#); [Contract Theory](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Equality and Egalitarianism](#); [Feminism](#); [Global Civil Society](#); [Human Nature](#); [Theories of](#); [International Law](#); [Justice](#); [Kant, Immanuel](#); [Law and Political Thought](#); [Legitimacy](#); [Liberty](#); [Theories of](#); [Locke, John](#); [Natural Law](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Progress](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Republicanism](#); [Revolution](#); [Rights, Civil](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [State of Nature](#); [Toleration](#); [United Nations](#); [Theories of the](#); [Utopianism](#); [Wollstonecraft, Mary](#).

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Matthew Wilson Matthew Wilson

Romanticism

Romanticism

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Romanticism

The origins and nature of the movement known as romanticism have been much discussed, although with little fundamental consensus as to how they should be defined. The chief difficulty here is the great diversity of the movement, whose principal centers at the peak of its influence, c. 1800–50, were Germany and Britain, with notable developments elsewhere in later periods. Reacting to scientism, rationalism, the commercial and Industrial revolutions, and then also in part the French Revolution, the romantics were active in literature, poetry, painting, and music. Some of their concerns, such as a fascination with horror, awe, and the sublime; the gothic and macabre; and the peculiarity and intensity of feeling that accompanied these perceptions, had relatively little political purchase. In other areas, notably a focus on reconstructing the past, on the role played by heroic individuals in history, on the dangers of mob rule and its subsequent suppression of individuality, and on the primacy of feelings in understanding the sense of self, of location, and of obedience and loyalty, political implications abounded. Some of these tended to be reactionary, others radical, or both at the same time; nationalism often shared both attributes. Despite their differences, some common intellectual themes shared by them that have important political bearings included a fascination with the past and alarm respecting the future; a focus on nature, particularly as contrasted with the city, as a source of awe, inspiration, and evidence of God's presence; an aesthetic concern with individual and especially artistic creativity, originality, and genius as an expression of human uniqueness; and a

philosophical focus on intuitive, emotional, or religious insights by contrast with those gained from mere reason. Politically, the romantics contributed chiefly to ideas of nationalism, individualism, and religious and political reform through the first half of the nineteenth century. In Britain, romantics reacted chiefly to industrialization; in Germany, it was the chaos attendant on the Napoleonic wars, and the connections between the French Revolution and the Enlightenment, which were of greater concern, and led to romanticism being more closely connected with nationalism. While all reacted adversely to some of the more prominent aspects of modernity, the romantics thus did not share an identical political agenda, and there is no such thing as “political romanticism” as such in the singular.

In Britain, the cultivation of sensibility and praise for more natural as opposed to conventional morés formed part of the late eighteenth-century origins of romanticism and was often linked to the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whose *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* (1755) and other works expressed much disdain for the falsehood and artificiality of civilized societies. Describing the ideal state of human society as one in which social inequality, private property, luxury, and refinement were not too far advanced, Rousseau trumpeted the virtues of small-scale agrarian republics where direct democracy encouraged civic virtue and inequality was restrained. His writings were often later associated with the ideal of the “noble savage” or presumed greater virtue of primitive peoples. Other writers, however, began nostalgically to lament the loss of their own pre-industrial societies of firmer social boundaries, and more resolute senses of propriety, rectitude, and duty, and the religiosity often assumed to bind these together. This would serve as one of the bases for the origins of modern conservatism.

After the French Revolution, a variety of appeals to ideal and sometimes semi-mythical pasts emerged, often republican in inspiration, and often combined with radical and even revolutionary sentiments. Edmund Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) is often taken to be the starting point for conservative defenses of monarchy, aristocracy, the clergy, and a more “organic” approach to both society and the pace of political change. This political stance, and the course of the revolution itself, led some, like William Wordsworth, to commence the period as radicals and

then to become deeply conservative. Others, like Samuel Taylor Coleridge, sought to shore up the moral authority of the decaying priesthood as an institution of social stability. Still others, like William Godwin, the most prominent Rousseauist in Britain at the time of the revolution, took the path of extreme individualism as a means of defeating the malevolent tendencies of organized social institutions. And a few, like William Cobbett, took the path in the opposite direction from Toryism to radicalism, lambasting the wreckage left by industrialization and the “deserted village” bereft of stout yeomanry of Oliver Goldsmith’s 1770 eponymous poem, and promoted opposition to the new monied Whigs, political economists, and Malthusians, as well as a sentimental conservatism of the spirit. By the 1830s, a few, like Thomas Carlyle, also turned to authoritarian socialism as a means of countering the disruption caused by the relentless progress of commercial and industrial society and urged in *Past and Present* (1843) the recapturing of the ordered universe of medieval society now led by captains of industry as a response to economic distress. Carlyle’s philo-medievalism and proto-socialism was revived by one of the great art and architectural critics of the age, John Ruskin, whose *Unto This Last* (1860) sought a renewal of the bonds of medieval loyalty from below and duty from above through a socialistic system of economic exchange. This, in turn, shorn of its authoritarian elements, helped to inspire the socialism of William Morris, although this had Icelandic and other sources as well. Even more than Ruskin, too, Morris imagined that the future socialist society would permit the free development of creative activity on the part of all workers, rendering art and the production of articles of beauty for everyday life an integral part of human existence. And John Stuart Mill would adopt some leading romantic themes to liberal philosophy, trumpeting against the evident mediocrity and “tyranny of the majority” of modern commercial democracies the virtues of individuality, creativity, and “character” in *On Liberty* (1859).

In Germany, the more political strands of romanticism stemmed in part from the “cult of genius” of the *Sturm und Drang*. This German literary movement associated itself with the texts of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Friedrich Schiller. The French occupation of Germany, and particularly the diffusion of French neoclassicism, provoked the movement’s rejection of foreign rationalist culture. The French Revolution and Napoleon’s

reorganization of Germany equally spurred philosophic discourses on the intrinsic value of nationhood. Johann Gottfried von Herder assembled a philosophy of cultural nationalism. He was less engaged in politics, science, and rationalism than in religion, custom, and feeling in the Pietist tradition. Johann Gottlieb Fichte promoted a contentious appreciation of Kantian philosophy that underpinned autocracy of the ego and imagination. He developed exclusionary ideas regarding the identity of “nation” as the highest common interest. Language served as the primary bond and boundary of the nation-state, followed by education, culture, geography, and race.

Although early German romantics generally bolstered monarchic rule, they perceived its practices as corrupt and tyrannical. Novalis recommended participatory government be joined to republican monarchy. Fichte concluded that citizenship germinated only from full allegiance to the state, which supplied its power. Schiller thought the monarch could lead by the example of civic virtue. Coupled with a republican aesthetic program, this mode of governance would stabilize insurrectionary predilections and help to realize an ideal nation.

Religion embodied the German romantics’ critical reaction to the French Revolution. Observing the results of the Terror, Herder affirmed that France remained unprepared for republican life. Moral instruction was critical to any true, operative republican society. Adam Müller strove to spiritualize economics, politics, monarchy, and international relations. His revisionist texts entailed Christ dying for both the nation-state and the individual. Friedrich Schleiermacher declared that patriotic communities empowered the national genius. The vernaculars of race, religion, soil, and culture in a folk expression built from the patriarchal family would produce “greater Germany.” The social structure they envisioned was analogous to medieval feudalism.

Although antiromantic and received as un-Christian, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel’s philosophy of relativism conveyed not Kantian universal “reason” but the notion that rational thought differed according to time and space. F. W. J. Schelling sought to eradicate Hegelianism and communist ideas diffusing in German universities. Friedrich Engels was his

discontented student in the early 1840s. The degree to which he and Marx can be described as “romantics” is however contentious. Marx’s 1844 “Paris Manuscripts” described an unalienated state of human existence as the goal of the communist movement and saw this, following Ludwig Feuerbach, as a return of objectified powers and capacities to the individual as creator/laborer. This ideal drew on a concept of creativity and of free labor that was indebted to Charles Fourier in particular and also assumed that an essentially sociable human essence existed that was being degraded by capitalism. Both Marx and Engels can certainly be accused of having “romanticized” both the idea of the revolution and its agent, the proletariat, who are at least tacitly at times imbued with an essentialist goodness, and also the supposedly cleansing and liberating effects of violence itself, themes later taken up by Jean-Paul Sartre and Frantz Fanon, among others. But Marx and Engels were not antimodernist and did not trumpet the virtues of nature or associating with it as such. Indeed their aim was, like Robert Owen’s and Charles Fourier’s, to reconcile the contradictions between town and country. The more Fourierist aspects of their vision, particularly occupational flexibility, reflected some sense of the advantages of precapitalist agrarian life. But these aspects were also given little attention in the writings of either men after 1845 and are central neither to the goals of the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) nor their later chief works. Indeed the turning from “utopian” toward “scientific” socialism was in some respects precisely an antiromantic movement on the part of both.

In France, the more conservative romantics generally lamented secularization as well as many other aspects of modernity. François-René de Chateaubriand’s work romanticized the culture of Christianity. Its decadent pageantry, bells, symbolic formalism, and Gregorian chants, he thought, made religion indivisible from public life. Chateaubriand rejected the Enlightenment *philosophes* and their abstract ideas. Louis de Bonald’s contribution was his political engagement to annul legal divorce to ensure that the family remained the basic unit of society. Maistre commanded the militant restoration of the absolute, righteous, and ancient triumvir of classicism, the monarchy, and Catholicism. This resurrected power, he anticipated, would obliterate temporal democracy and Protestantism—the purported causes of the revolution.

Revolutionary thought also inspired new narratives of modernity in which the dislocation and alienation attendant on the destruction of the *ancien regime* could be supplanted in turn by a newly fortified system of moral relations. In France, Henri de Saint-Simon constructed a new scientific morality to guide social reorganization. In collaboration with Saint-Simon, Augustin Thierry proposed a European Parliament, chaired by a Newtonian scientific elite, to reconcile international and civic conflicts. The Saint-Simonians carried forward the outcome of their leader's thought "New Christianity." They intended to reconcile reason, imagination, and love via universal association, only to offend public morals by establishing a communistic community in Ménilmontant, a neighborhood in the twentieth arrondissement of Paris. Various French historians also attempted to come to terms with the Romantic critique of the revolution and to ascertain how individualism, community, and nation might be adequately reconciled with modernity. Like Saint-Simon, François Guizot viewed liberalism as the product of modernity. Protestantism and middle-class institutions paved the path to an orderly but progressive society. He favored centralized representative government and a constitutional monarchy to protect individual rights and legal equality for the general interest. Jules Michelet worked to establish historical research as an academic discipline. Its purpose, he maintained, was to delineate national identity and reconcile liberty and community. These writers agreed that revolution, whether successful or not, led society toward less division and inequality and toward a more fulfilling collective life. In the United States, less concerned initially with the pressing concerns of public order and poverty, reaction to early industrialization provoked in some instances a more individualist romantic politics, with Henry David Thoreau's *Walden; or, Life in the Woods* (1854), inspired by New England transcendentalism, becoming a prototypical novel of introspection and plea for the harmony of the individual with nature.

Romanticism can thus broadly be understood as the European zeitgeist that followed the Enlightenment and reacted to the French Revolution in particular. As an aspect of a wider critique of modernity, it represented a lament for the loss of religious faith, for the settled order and duties of preindustrial society, and for the trampling of the masses on the ideals of their notional intellectual superiors. It influenced the conceptual development of Western nation-states via heroic imaginings of natural

territorial settings, historic narratives of community, a cult of individuality wedded to ideas of genius and creativity, and visions of a new world more moral than the present evident wanton hedonism of the new capitalist order. National identity further reflected and reinforced numerous imperial conflicts among France, Germany, England, and America. In addition to war, the increasing democratization of Western society and religious and cultural differences contributed to different trajectories in industrial, economic, social, and political development. Moments of romantic rebellion against bourgeois conformity occurred from the late nineteenth century through the 1960s. This rebellion was sometimes personal, conceived as a lifestyle, but often assumed at least temporarily collective forms, as in intentional communities, often on the land, practicing ideals at variance with mainstream life, and especially the predominance of technology. In the twentieth century, various forms of anarchism, communism, socialism, nationalism, and fascism can thus be linked with romantic aspirations and ideals, often in proportion to their propensity to engage in a critique of modernity generally.

Matthew Wilson

See also [Babeuf, Gracchus](#); [Bonald, Louis de](#); [Burke, Edmund](#); [Capitalism](#); [Communism](#), [Varieties of](#); [Conservatism](#); [Environmentalism](#), [Ecology](#), and [Political Thought](#); [Fascism](#); [Fichte, Johann Gottlieb](#); [French Revolution](#), [Political Thought of the](#); [German Political Thought](#); [Herder, Johann Gottfried](#); [Justice](#); [Morris, William](#); [Nationalism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Progress](#); [Proudhon, Pierre-Joseph](#); [Rousseau, Jean-Jacques](#); [Ruskin, John](#); [Saint-Simon, Henri de](#); [Technology and Political Thought](#); [Thoreau, Henry David](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Rousseau, Jean-Jacques

Jean-Jacques Rousseau is a pivotal thinker in the history of political thought. First, Rousseau's thought in general marks a turning point as he was the first great critic of early modern philosophy whose own thinking constituted a radicalized version of early modern thought that influenced later romantic, historical, socialist, and other schools of thought. Second, Rousseau is a seminal democratic theorist, being the first major thinker to argue that democracy is the only legitimate form of government.

Life

The life and thought of Rousseau (1712–78) are intertwined to an unusual degree for a political thinker. In addition to writing autobiographical works that he saw as part of his thought, Rousseau himself suggested that his unusual life enabled him to grasp the variety of human nature and see through the conventions of his time.

Rousseau was born in Geneva to a mother who died giving birth to him and to a watchmaker father who would soon abandon him. His early education was sporadic and largely informal, the result of his early love of reading romantic novels and ancient history, reading that activated his imagination and made him dissatisfied with the more mundane world he actually inhabited. Apprenticed to an engraver, Rousseau first learned the ills of personal dependence. At age 16, he ran away from his native city and began

a life of wandering and exile that lasted for the rest of his days. Roaming through the alpine region of eastern France and northern Italy, Rousseau earned his bread as a lackey, seminarian, interpreter for a fake churchman soliciting contributions for the Holy Land, music teacher, and tutor. For over a decade, the young man lived with Françoise-Louise de Warens, a woman some 13 years his senior whom he affectionately called “Maman” and whose lover he soon became. She encouraged Rousseau’s intellectual and artistic interests. He read widely in literature, history, philosophy, and science, and, with little formal training in music, presented himself as a music teacher. As his relationship with “Maman” cooled and his ambition warmed, Rousseau left for Paris around the beginning of 1742 with two operas and a new system of musical notation in hand, determined to conquer the intellectual capital of Europe.

After his system of musical notation failed to win the sponsorship of the Academy of Sciences, Rousseau found himself just one among the many ambitious young men who flocked to Paris. Rousseau was briefly employed as secretary to the French ambassador to Venice from 1743 to 1744, leaving after he quarreled with his superior. Although his stay in the serene republic was brief, it stirred his first serious thoughts on politics. Returning to Paris, he went to work on an opera but once again failed to gain recognition. He became close friends during this period with Denis Diderot, along with Jean le Rond d’Alembert, Étienne Bonnot de Condillac, and other philosophes just beginning to achieve success and notoriety. During this same period, he began his relationship with Thérèse Levasseur, who became his lifelong mistress. Diderot invited Rousseau to write the articles on musical theory for the *Encyclopédie*, the great Enlightenment project he was beginning. By the time Rousseau’s collaboration was announced in the “Preliminary Discourse” to the *Encyclopédie* of 1751, however, Rousseau had emerged suddenly from obscurity to become the most controversial author in Europe.

Rousseau’s metamorphosis began in the fall of 1749. Walking to the chateau of Vincennes to visit Diderot, who was imprisoned there for his subversive writings, Rousseau paused to read the *Mercure de France*, a gazette he had brought along with him, and saw there an announcement for a prize essay competition sponsored by the Academy of Dijon on the question of whether the restoration of the sciences and arts had tended to

purify morals. Rousseau was blinded by a sudden inspiration, the so-called “Illumination of Vincennes,” in which he later claimed to have seen in a single glimpse his entire philosophical system. “At the moment of that reading I saw another universe and became another man,” he recalled in the *Confessions*, “and from that instant I was lost.”

Rousseau’s negative answer to the Academy of Dijon’s question, arguing that the advancement of the sciences and arts tends to corrupt morals, won him the prize. When the *Discourse on the Sciences and Arts* was published in early 1751, Rousseau became famous. The work was widely seen as paradoxical, especially since Rousseau himself was a practicing artist and a contributor to a project dedicated to the advancement of the sciences and arts. Rousseau wrote a number of defenses of his *Discourse*, and of himself. His celebrity spread when he finally succeeded in his chosen profession with the successful performance of his opera, *The Village Soothsayer* (*Le Devin du village*), in 1752. His opera remained one of the most performed pieces at the Paris Opéra well into the nineteenth century.

The *Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Men* (1755), along with the article “Political Economy” for the *Encyclopédie* (1755), cemented Rousseau’s reputation as a controversial political theorist. He later claimed that he only fully revealed the core of his thought in the *Discourse on Inequality*: that man is by nature good and is corrupted in society. His inquiry into human nature and the origins of society in the work culminated in an attack on the corruption and inequalities of his contemporary society.

Shortly after publishing the *Discourse on Inequality*, Rousseau extended his thought to his life by leaving Paris for the nearby countryside to undergo a personal reform. He resolved to make himself financially independent through his trade as a musical copyist, an occupation he pursued for much of the remainder of his life. His decision to distance himself from the corrupt moral and intellectual world of Paris began his alienation from Diderot and his other former friends. His final falling out with Diderot was announced in his next important work, the “Letter to d’Alembert” (1758), which was occasioned by d’Alembert’s article on “Geneva” for the *Encyclopédie*. In his “Letter,” Rousseau objected to d’Alembert’s

suggestion that a theater should be established in Rousseau's native city, where such entertainments were prohibited as a result of the republic's Calvinist heritage, and argued that the theater was appropriate only for corrupted peoples. Rousseau would soon make the same argument about romantic novels, in the preface to his own romantic novel, *Julie, or the New Heloise* (1761). Set in the foothills of the Alps, one of the purposes of his novel, Rousseau explained, was to give his readers a taste for the countryside and to make them disgusted with the corrupt cities that drew them. Rousseau viewed his turn to literature as part of his philosophical mission, and as a way to reach a popular audience by appealing to their literary taste while redirecting that taste toward more virtuous ends. *Julie* would prove the most popular novel of the eighteenth century, and Rousseau was known by his contemporaries foremost for his novel.

Rousseau's reputation today as a political theorist rests largely on his treatise, *On the Social Contract*. Published in April 1762, the *Social Contract* was joined a month later by Rousseau's educational treatise, *Emile, or On Education*, which contains a précis of the *Social Contract* as well as a lengthy treatment of religion. The publication of these two works quickly changed his life.

In June 1762, *Emile* was condemned by Parlement of Paris and the Sorbonne for its unorthodox theological views, and the Parlement of Paris ordered its author's arrest. Rousseau fled Paris on the morning of June 9, passing the men sent to arrest him in his carriage as he rode out. He traveled toward Geneva, only to learn that both *Social Contract* and *Emile* were condemned and burned in his native city. Rousseau settled in Môtiers, a small village in the mountains in the north of Switzerland, where he lived for the next three years. During this period, he published defenses of his two condemned works, justifying *Emile* in his *Letter to Beaumont* (1763), the Archbishop of Paris who had also issued a proclamation condemning the work, and defending the *Social Contract* against its condemnation by Geneva in the *Letters Written from the Mountain* (1764). His later political works include two "applied" works: the *Constitutional Project for Corsica*, begun in 1764–65 at the request of a Corsican patriot, and the *Considerations on the Government of Poland*, written in 1770–71.

Rousseau's stay in Môtiers became increasingly difficult, and he left the village in September 1765 when the inhabitants stoned his house. After a month-long idyll on St. Pierre's Island in the middle of Lake Bienné that he later immortalized in his *Reveries of the Solitary Walker*, Rousseau made his way to his next place of exile, England. He traveled to England at the invitation and in the company of David Hume, but the two philosophers quickly quarreled. Rousseau returned to France in 1767, eventually resettling in Paris, where the authorities agreed not to arrest him as long as he did not publish.

Rousseau completed his first major autobiographical work, *The Confessions*, in 1770. In what is generally considered the first modern autobiography, Rousseau not only recounts his life but presents it as a uniquely honest and accurate portrait of human nature. His readings from the work in small gatherings made his listeners uneasy with his revelations about himself and offended others unhappy with his revelations about them, and the police ordered him to cease. Rousseau wrote two other autobiographical works, *Rousseau Judge of Jean-Jacques*, commonly known as the *Dialogues* and completed in 1776, and the *Reveries of the Solitary Walker*, which he left uncompleted at his death.

In May 1778, Rousseau moved outside of Paris to Ermenonville, the estate of one of his admirers, which would become Rousseau's last refuge, as he died of a massive apoplexy on the morning of July 2. He was buried at Ermenonville and rested there until 1794 when the French revolutionaries moved his body in great procession and interred it in the Panthéon.

The Two Discourses

Rousseau's political thought rests on the theory of human nature and society developed in the *Discourse on the Sciences and Arts* and especially the *Discourse on Inequality*. The essay that made him famous, the *Discourse on the Sciences and Arts*, addresses the question posed by the Academy of Dijon concerning whether the restoration of the sciences and arts tended to purify morals. Although we may today assume that the learned society asking such a question in the center of the Enlightenment would naturally expect a positive reply, the issue of the relationship between morality and

the advancement of the sciences and arts was still hotly contested at this time. Apart from its rhetorical power, what set Rousseau's own essay apart was that he did not rely on traditional religious or civic republican arguments concerning the corrupting effects of secular science and luxurious arts, although he draws on them, but instead offers a scientific or philosophic investigation of the effects of the sciences and arts. The effect of the advancement of the sciences and arts on morals is, he argues, no less subject to scientific study than the effect of the moon on the tides, and can be seen throughout history. In this way, Rousseau first staked out the paradoxical and complex position he would occupy throughout his thought: as a critic of modern thought whose very critique is fundamentally based on modern thought itself.

Although Rousseau at first appears in the *Discourse* simply to condemn the effects of the sciences and arts in the name of religion and patriotism, by the end of the work, he praises the benefits of the sciences as advanced by individuals of such intellectual caliber as Francis Bacon, René Descartes, and Isaac Newton; the corrupting effects of the sciences and arts stems not from the sciences and arts themselves, but rather through their popularization as a social fad that stimulates pride and fosters inequality. The argument of the *Discourse* is therefore complex and somewhat deceptively advanced by Rousseau, and his contemporary readers—and many later scholars—have therefore been confused about his ultimate position in the work or have viewed the *Discourse* as inchoate or even contradictory. The underlying psychological and social arguments of the work concerning pride and inequality would pave the way for his more extensive investigation of human nature and society in the *Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Men* (1755).

Rousseau argues in the *Discourse on Inequality* that all of his predecessors had made the fundamental mistake of assuming that human nature is the same in all times and places; they all thought they had described “natural man” when they had actually described “civil man” or human nature as it is shaped by various forces and especially by social relations. According to Rousseau, human nature is malleable to an extent that no other thinker had previously realized; humans are “historical” beings. Rousseau terms this capacity for change in our passions and faculties “perfectibility,” which he

argues is the defining characteristic of human beings. Rousseau's account of "perfectibility" is, however, largely ironic. Rather than arguing that "perfectibility" is the capacity for the improvement of the individual and the species, he claims that our capacity for change generally leads to our corruption and misery. Rousseau's argument in this regard has two main features. First, he argues that the development of our needs and passions generally outstrips our ability to satisfy these needs and passions, thus, making us unhappy and dependent on others. Second, he argues that, as we come to live in society, our very identity and happiness is dependent on the opinions of others, leading us to wish to appear to be otherwise than we truly are, creating psychological division within ourselves and fostering false relationships in society. Despite his generally pessimistic account of "perfectibility," however, Rousseau never denies that the highest capacities of humans, both intellectual and moral, also depend on our capacity for development. Rather, his argument is that the advances that make possible the intellectual and moral development of a few individuals tend to come at the expense of the corruption and misery of the majority.

Rousseau's *Discourse on Inequality* takes the form of a hypothetical history of human nature, beginning from our original or natural condition and tracing our development up to the present day. In Part I of the *Discourse*, Rousseau describes "natural man" in the "pure state of nature" as an essentially solitary and stupid creature, initially no different than the other beasts. Rousseau's presentation of the initial state of nature is directed largely at Thomas Hobbes, although, importantly, he accepts Hobbes's basic premises concerning the natural egoism of humans and the instrumental role of reason in relation to the passions. According to Rousseau, Hobbes has illegitimately assumed that humans naturally have the needs and passions that would require permanent contact with their fellow humans. Humans can satisfy their primary desire for self-preservation without developing the psychological traits—pride, fear of death, etc.—and their social manifestations—competition, war, etc.—that Hobbes attributes to them. Furthermore, Rousseau argues that humans' naturally limited needs and passions would mean that they by nature lack reason, as well as speech, foresight, and other characteristics that depend on reason that Aristotle, Hobbes, and almost every previous thinker had argued characterize humans. Finally, and centrally for Rousseau's thought, he argues that humans are

naturally “good.” Rousseau does not mean by this that humans are naturally moral, virtuous, or beneficent since he argues that humans originally are not social, rational, or moral creatures. Rather, humans are naturally “good” in that their natural passions and faculties tend toward their self-preservation and well-being as individuals and as a species. In this sense, then, Rousseau can claim that humans as Hobbes described them are “evil” in that their natural passions and faculties lead to their misery and even destruction. By contrast, for Rousseau humans are neither naturally political animals, as Aristotle argued, nor egoistic animals that require the state for their preservation. Instead, for Rousseau, society leads to the corruption of humans, turning “good” into “wicked.”

In Part II of the *Discourse on Inequality*, Rousseau traces the development of humans out of the original state of nature into society and then sketches the development of society up to the present time. According to Rousseau, although humans possess the potential for development, “perfectibility,” that potential need never have developed. Human development, therefore, must be a result of external and extrinsic causes, such as climate or natural disasters, which brought humans into permanent contact with one another and thereby created the conditions for their development. Rousseau imagines how the family and then larger societies might have been established and suggests how reason, language, and other faculties could have developed under those changed conditions. Most importantly, he portrays how our fundamental passions would alter, changing the natural self-love (*amour de soi*) simply concerned with self-preservation into other-regarding pride (*amour-propre*), and generally transforming the heart and mind. Up to this point in our development, these changes in our nature constitute a corruption of our nature to some extent, but they also make us recognizably “human.” Contrary to the common misinterpretation that sees him as romanticizing the original condition of “noble savages” (a term he never uses), Rousseau explicitly argues that the stage of largely developed humans living in small “savage societies” is the best condition for humankind.

This stage of human development, however, comes to an end, perhaps inevitably, with the invention of property. Property makes humans dependent on one another—economically, socially, and psychologically—

and corrupts rich and poor, master and slave alike. Property makes it possible for unnatural inequalities of birth, wealth, and so on, to have a permanent effect on the fates of individuals. Disputes over property lead to a war of all against all, and political society therefore becomes necessary. The very establishment of political society, and then government, however, ultimately leads to the condition of radical inequalities and corruption that Rousseau argues characterizes his own time. Although Rousseau describes the initial pseudo-contract that created political society as a fraudulent ploy by the rich to secure their property against the poor, unlike Karl Marx and other thinkers who would follow him, he sees the establishment of property and of political society as an inevitable and defensible development. The project he undertakes in the *Social Contract* is to make these arrangements legitimate.

The Social Contract

“Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains,” Rousseau proclaims near the outset of his major political treatise, *On the Social Contract*. His project in the work is to legitimate the “chains” that bind us to one another and to achieve a new kind of political and moral freedom through democratic self-legislation.

Like his predecessors in the social contract tradition, Rousseau argues that individuals are naturally free and that legitimate authority must therefore originate in a conventional agreement. Unlike his predecessors, however, Rousseau insists that we must somehow remain as free as we were before entering the political association for this contract to be legitimate. For Rousseau, we cannot alienate our freedom by consenting to allow others rule over us, even as elected representatives. His solution to this problem is paradoxical: the total alienation of all those joining the political association to the association itself. For Rousseau, the “sovereign” does not rule over “subjects,” as does Hobbes’s sovereign or Locke’s legislative, but rather the people as a whole makes laws for itself in its role as “sovereign” and all obey those same laws in their role as “subjects.” The only legitimate form of political authority is democratic self-legislation, and the members of this republic achieve the civil and moral freedom of true “citizens.”

The “general will” is the term Rousseau uses to describe the will of the sovereign people in its legislative capacity, and this term has caused considerable confusion and controversy. Striking statements by Rousseau such as “the general will is always right” (*Social Contract*, II.3) and “whoever refuses to obey the general will shall be constrained to do so by the entire body, which means only that he will be forced to be free” (*Social Contract*, I.7) have only made debates more heated. The “general will” is sometimes conceived as a mystical popular will, perhaps accessible only to those who rule in the name of the people, as claimed by the French Revolutionaries inspired by Rousseau. Rousseau’s actual conception of the general will, however, can be understood by beginning from its voluntarist foundation. The “will” of the individual is the desire for self-preservation and well-being natural to all humans. The problem that arises as humans develop is that this desire is frustrated, making the political association necessary. The “general will,” then, is fundamentally the same desire of the individual when he or she considers himself as part of the entire political association, as a “citizen.” The general will is always “right” in principle, then, because the citizens by definition desire what is in their interest, but it does not follow that they are always properly informed about that interest. Likewise, people who refuse to obey the general will must be “forced to be free” both because they want the benefits of the political association without bearing the costs and because they cannot otherwise achieve civil and moral freedom. The tension between the “particular will” an individual has considered as an individual and the “general will” he or she has considered as a citizen is the fundamental problem of politics for Rousseau.

The difficulty of getting naturally self-interested individuals to see themselves as citizens, a problem that stems from Rousseau’s theory of human nature, leads Rousseau to discuss the need for the “legislator” (*Social Contract*, II.7). The “legislator” is a kind of founder that makes a people into a people, and Rousseau refers to such traditional examples as Moses and Lycurgus. The legislator cannot accomplish this through legislation, since laws can only legitimately come from the people itself, and must instead do so through creating a shared culture through common customs, mores, and opinions. In addition, Rousseau speaks approvingly of the legislator’s resort to religion to give divine sanction to the community

and its laws, and he devotes the longest chapter in the *Social Contract* (IV.8) to a discussion of civil religion.

Rousseau does not believe, however, that legitimate political institutions and a shared culture can permanently solve the problem of politics. Given the inclination for the natural self-interest of individuals to reassert itself against their identity as citizens, and the related tendency for the government to usurp the power of the sovereign people, Rousseau argues that the natural path for all political associations is ultimately decline and death. His prescriptions are meant to make the chains that bind us in society as legitimate, beneficial, and enduring as possible. The fundamental question for interpreting Rousseau's thought, given his core argument that humans are naturally good but are corrupted in society, is to what extent a properly ordered society can prevent our corruption.

John T. Scott

See also [Authority](#); [Contract Theory](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [French Revolution](#), [Political Thought of the](#); [General Will](#); [Human Nature](#), [Theories of](#); [Law and Political Thought](#); [Liberty](#), [Theories of](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Montesquieu, Baron de](#); [Natural Law](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Progress](#); [Property](#), [Theories of](#); [Radicalism](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Republicanism](#); [Revolution](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Romanticism](#); [Rule of Law](#); [Socialism](#); [Sovereignty](#), [State](#); [State](#), [Theories of the](#); [State of Nature](#); [Utopianism](#)

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Spencer Zifcak Spencer Zifcak

Rule of Law

Rule of law

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Rule of Law

Modern accounts of the rule of law commonly commence with a consideration of the work of legal philosopher Joseph Raz. In a celebrated article, “The Rule of Law and its Virtue,” Raz sets out his understanding of the concept clearly and simply. The rule of law, he argues, is animated by two governing ideas. First, people should be ruled by the law and obey it. Second, the law should be such that people will be able to be guided by it. This latter idea is crucial as it embeds the core ethical principle that underpins the rule of law. As conceived by Friedrich von Hayek, the object of the rule of law is to ensure that the individual can make informed choices affecting the directions of his or her life without arbitrary interference by the state. In their interactions with the state and with other individuals, the rule of law ensures that individuals will be aware of the parameters within which their choices must be framed and will be able to plan their individual affairs on the basis of that knowledge.

On that foundation, Raz sets down several subsidiary principles embodied within larger conception of the rule of law. To meet the ethical objective, the law must be prospective, open, and clear; it should be stable; the manner of its making must be guided by transparent and general rules; it must be applied by a judiciary that is independent and impartial; its procedures should conform to the rules of natural justice; courts must be equally accessible to all; and the judicature should have the power to review the application of law to ensure its conformity with all of these basic principles.

For Raz, the value of the rule of law rests on three foundations. First, the rule of law acts as a bastion against the arbitrary use of power. Power is constrained by the existence and application of clear and accessible rules. Second, it protects individual freedom. That freedom is secured by creating predictability in people's environment so as to maximize their capacity for choice. Third, the rule of law contributes to the preservation of individual dignity. It underpins human autonomy by recognizing people as capable of pursuing their individual objectives and planning for their futures.

Raz's conception of the rule of law is frequently described as formal. This means that it is concerned predominantly with the character of law rather than with its content. From this perspective, the rule of law has little to say about whether a law is good or bad. It is confined to delineating those aspects of law necessary for it to establish its authority and to provide a basic guide to individual behavior. As Raz puts it, the rule of law is just one of the virtues by which a legal system may be judged. It is not to be confused with parallel virtues such as democracy, justice, equality, or human rights.

That Raz confined the rule of law to this formal conception has been the principal source of philosophical objection to it. For other influential philosophers, it is too much, for instance, to accept that the rule of law may coexist equally within both democratic and autocratic systems of government. In an autocracy, the law may be open, accessible, and clear, and therefore capable of being obeyed, but the parameters it places around individual choice may be so constricted as to render any such choice meaningless.

This fundamental criticism has led other legal thinkers to propose a more substantive conception of the rule of law, one that takes the law's content as well as character into account. For Ronald Dworkin, for example, principle matters as much as legality. Dworkin contrasts the formal conception of the rule of law, which he describes as the "rulebook" conception, with his own "rights" conception. This perspective insists that individuals have political rights against the state, in addition to moral rights as against one another. These rights, he argues, must be recognized as essential threads in the rule of law's fabric. They provide the principled foundations on which

individual citizens may approach the courts to vindicate their moral and political claims. The rights conception is in stark contrast to the rulebook approach in that “it requires, as part of the ideal of law, that the rules in the rulebook capture and enforce moral rights” (Dworkin 1985, 12).

The distinction is important because one’s theory as to the nature of judicial adjudication will depend heavily on the attitude one takes toward the competing conceptions. An adherent of the rulebook conception is inclined to the view that hard cases should be decided by endeavoring to determine what is “really” in the rulebook. Having determined that, one applies the rule so unearthed. Followers of the rights conception pose an entirely different question when hard cases must be determined. They ask whether a plaintiff in legal proceedings has the moral right to the legal remedy that they claim. The answer to that question, in turn, will depend on whether the claim runs with the grain of an identified and fundamental right recognized over time as an essential element in the law’s tapestry.

Dworkin summarizes his argument for a substantive conception of the rule of law as follows:

It encourages each individual to suppose that his relations with other citizens and with his government are matters of justice, and it encourages him and his fellow citizens to discuss as a community what justice requires these relationships to be. It promises a forum in which his claims about what he is entitled to have will be steadily and seriously considered at his demand. (Dworkin 1985, 32)

Plainly, the substantive theory of the rule of law incorporates into its essence the idea that every individual possesses certain fundamental rights. These in turn form the basis of individual, moral claims against the state and as against other citizens. The role of courts, then, is to determine according to principle which rights should be recognized by law and to do so by reference to the core democratic value that all people should be treated equally.

Similarly, T. R. S. Allan builds his parallel, substantive conception of the rule of law upon a consideration of the core values that underlie it. It cannot be sufficient, he argues, for the rule of law to adopt a neutral stance as between differing conceptions of justice and fairness. If it is to mean something, it must take a position. That position will be determined by examining and explicating the values that underlie it. For Allan, the core values that underpin the rule of law are liberty, equality, and autonomy.

Human dignity is dependent on individual liberty. A life cannot be described as dignified if it is lived in chains. For this reason, Allan observes, English common law has consistently demonstrated a bias in favor of personal freedom. A rule of law absent a commitment to liberty would not be worth the name. It is the same with equality. The common law has demonstrated a commitment to equality, at least in the sense that the law's underlying principles should be equally and consistently applied. "The consistent application of legal principle, required by the ideal of legality, involves a process of moral reasoning in which inequalities in treatment at the hands of the state have to be justified" (Allan 1993, 43). The law should, therefore, reflect the equal value accorded to every person. That too is essential to the preservation of human dignity. It follows that every citizen must be subject equally to the law and be treated equally by it. No individuals or organizations should be exempt from the law's application. The rule of law secures the value of autonomy through its establishment of a stable framework of rules in accordance with which every individual may make independent and effective life choices. In a free society, everyone should have a fair opportunity to pursue his or her own ends. The rule of law assists by creating legitimate expectations in accordance with which everyone may plot and plan their futures. "A legal system which observes the rule of law meets this requirement in the sense of attempting to guide people's behavior by affecting their deliberations about what to do, thereby respecting their rationality and autonomy" (Allan 1993, 27).

For Allan, to adopt a definition of the rule of law that excludes express consideration of the values that inform it is counterproductive. To do so robs the notion of its texture and power. In hard cases, the judiciary must

necessarily read the law in the light of values and principles essential to the achievement of justice.

How then should these two different conceptions of the rule of law be assessed? Political philosopher Judith Shklar provides a persuasive criterion. The rule of law, she argues, has its starting point in the constraint of arbitrariness. It constitutes a stable system of constraining rules that, because they apply equally to all, limit political capriciousness or, worse, the infliction of governmental cruelty. She sets her argument in the context of what she describes as the “liberalism of fear.” This is liberalism that puts cruelty and fanaticism at the very head of human vices. The fear it seeks to prevent is that “which is created by arbitrary, unexpected, unnecessary, and unlicensed acts of force” (Shklar 1998, 11).

Shklar builds on the work of Montesquieu, whose idea of the rule of law, she observes, was designed to achieve but one objective: to protect the ruled against the aggression of their rulers. The rule of law, applied equally to all, fulfills a fundamental aim. It frees people from the fear engendered by arbitrary governmental action. To be made to work effectively, it requires a complementary institutional innovation. The institutions of power have to check and balance one another. The maintenance of institutional equilibrium is the key to the protection of individual liberty and security. In this, the judiciary is central. It is the institution that must determine whether those who rule have acted in accordance with the law. Its independence is therefore critical. As Shklar puts it,

[T]he idea is not so much to ensure judicial rectitude and public confidence, as to prevent the executive and its many agents from imposing their powers, interests and persecutory inclinations upon the judiciary. The magistrate can then be perceived as the citizen’s most necessary protector. (Shklar 1998, 25)

It is readily apparent that this vision of the rule of law is one consistent with the elaboration of individual rights. These rights perform two, important functions. They create a legal barrier around the individual’s private space beyond which governments may not venture. They create a legal foundation

on the basis of which, more assertively, citizens may make moral claims on the state. Legally recognized rights provide the basis on which a remedy may be pursued for damage that flows from cruel or capricious governmental behavior. Rights constitute the “licenses and empowerments that citizens must have to preserve their freedoms and to protect themselves against abuse” (Shklar 1998, 19).

It follows that if one begins from the conceptual commencement point of arbitrariness, and the fear that it generates, one is more likely to adopt a substantive rather than a formal conception of the rule of law. Turning to the rulebook to determine how matters should be judged provides an inadequate basis on which to provide citizens with the equality of power they require to resist arbitrary action by the state. Without such equality, freedom may be but a chimera. The rights conception, embracing as it does, the institutionalization of rights, the creation of multiple centers of power and a pluralist political order, is far better suited to the task.

As Judith Shklar concludes,

If one then begins with the fear of violence, the insecurity of arbitrary government, and the discriminations of injustice, one may work one's way up to finding a significant place for the rule of law, and the boundaries it has historically set upon these most enduring of our political troubles. It is as such both the oldest and the newest of the theoretical and practical concerns of political theory. (Shklar 1998, 36)

Spencer Zifcak

See also [Authority](#); [Autonomy](#); [Conservatism](#); [Constitutionalism](#); [Contract Theory](#); [Equality and Egalitarianism](#); [Hayek, Friedrich](#); [Humanitarian Intervention](#); [International Law](#); [Justice](#); [Law and Political Thought](#); [Legitimacy](#); [Liberalism](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Montesquieu, Baron de](#); [Political Culture](#); [Power](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Separation of Powers](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Totalitarianism](#)

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Gill Cockram Gill Cockram

Ruskin, John

Ruskin, John

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Ruskin, John

John Ruskin (1819–1900) was a British art critic and social theorist who dedicated the latter half of his life to an emphasis on social and economic issues.

The complex aesthetic and historical origins of Ruskin's social theory create a dilemma for those attempting to give him a distinct ideological category. His habitual eclecticism, and a complete disregard for party politics, defies easy classification. He strongly criticized the division of labor and delivered a savage attack on the liberal laissez-faire interpretation of classical economics. He was antidemocratic, yet demanded economic justice, and throughout his adult life, he stressed the fundamental Christian ethic of brotherhood and cooperation as incompatible with the values attendant on industrial capitalism. He attracted many distinguished and like-minded sympathizers of all political persuasions, and despite his antidemocratic stance, he became a major influence in the late nineteenth-century socialist revival.

Ruskin's attraction, for socialists, was also complex. In his insistence on state intervention and social stratification, he was antiliberal, but although he associated with the first wave of Christian Socialism in the 1850s through his teaching at the London Working Men's College, he found himself ideologically removed from this disparate group by the strength of his own radicalism. Nonetheless, his emphasis on community and his refutation of laissez-faire economics caused many emergent socialists to

link his name with Robert Owen and secured his later influence on a working-class audience.

If one particular work encapsulates Ruskin's political ideology, then it is *Unto This Last* (1860). In this small book, considered by some to be virtually a socialist manifesto, Ruskin advocated reforms that transgressed all the rules of the non-interventionist economic system. He recommended improvements that have since been realized in the concept of a welfare state and demanded a principle of socioeconomic interaction that helped to redefine the language of political economy. *Unto This Last* was initially not well received but ultimately became a powerful authority among socialist sympathizers.

The economist John A. Hobson is an important example of the often diffuse nature of Ruskin's influence. Hobson was the leading intellectual force behind New Liberalism and sought, fundamentally, an accommodation of socialism and liberalism. He took two basic principles from Ruskin: first, the principle of humanism, which defined Ruskin's economic critique, and which prompted Hobson to believe that all scientific principles should be subordinate to ethical ones, and, second, an organicist vision of society that led Hobson to reinterpret his own concepts, away from individualism toward a collectivist ideal of social welfare. Hobson tried to give Ruskin a socialist label, while drawing from a theory of social organization that was essentially conservative. Ruskin's organic theory, however, was derived, not from Edmund Burke, but from a consideration of the construction of a Gothic cathedral—integrated, but hierarchical, and ultimately producing a transcendent moral or spiritual dimension.

Ruskin tried to realize his ideal community through the establishment of The Guild of St. George in the 1870s. His vision was a form of agrarian utopia where the buying and securing of land would enable English men and women to work in harmony for the common good, thus, saving them from alienating industrial processes and ensuring a return to lost values. He did not want to recreate the past but to use it as an example of a successful economy based on agriculture and crafts—a form of feudal socialism—communal but hierarchical, which he wanted to adapt to the welfare of

current workers. His scheme, like most of his practical experiments, was ultimately unsuccessful, but his philanthropic legacy still resonates today.

Ruskin's influence permeated not only left-wing politics but also the world of trade-unionism. His impact lingered well into the twentieth century through his relationship with guild socialism, a movement designed to promote individual creativity. Among the many individuals who professed a considerable debt to Ruskin are William Morris, who was heavily influenced by Ruskin's account of work; the positivist thinker Frederic Harrison; Leo Tolstoy; and Mohandas Gandhi. Whatever conclusions people reach as to Ruskin's political orientation, it must be remembered that he was more influential than Karl Marx in the development of British socialist thought.

Gill Cockram

See also [Burke, Edmund](#); [Carlyle, Thomas](#); [Christian Socialism](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [French Revolution, Political Thought of the](#); [Gandhi, Mohandas \(Mahatma\)](#); [Hobson, John Atkinson](#); [Justice](#); [Morris, William](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Owen, Robert](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Property, Theories of](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Romanticism](#); [Saint-Simon, Henri de](#); [Socialism](#); [Tolstoy, Leo](#)

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Clive E. Hill Clive E. Hill

Russell, Bertrand

Russell, Bertrand

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Russell, Bertrand

Although he is best remembered today as an analytical philosopher and mathematician, Bertrand Russell's (1872–1970) political views had a notable impact in the English-speaking world during the twentieth century. He can be described as a “public intellectual,” as famous for his controversial views on topics such as religion, warfare, women's rights, marriage, and education as he was for purely academic studies. His most important political works were probably *German Social Democracy* (1896), *The Principles of Social Reconstruction* (1916), *The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism* (1920), *Marriage and Morals* (1929), *Power* (1938), *A History of Western Philosophy* (1945), and *Human Society in Ethics and Politics* (1954).

Originally born into a junior branch of the English aristocracy, Russell lost both his parents before he was four years old, and he was brought up in Surrey by his paternal grandmother and a succession of governesses and tutors. From 1890 to 1916, he was successively an undergraduate, a researcher, and a lecturer at Cambridge University; he was then deprived of the latter position because of his opposition to World War I. Having already attracted controversy by standing as an unsuccessful “Votes for Women” candidate at a parliamentary by-election in 1907, Russell was imprisoned in 1918—and later in 1961—because of pacifist agitation. Consequently, he spent much of the interwar period researching, teaching, and lecturing in Russia, China, and the United States, but he still found time to lose two further elections (for the Labour Party in 1922 and 1923) and to set up a

“progressive” school at Beacon Hill, Sussex, in 1927. Later, Russell seemed to have rejoined “the establishment” when, thanks to a quirk of dynastic inheritance law, he became an Earl in 1931, was readmitted to the staff of Cambridge University in 1944, and won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1950. However, in his final years, he reestablished his radical credentials by campaigning for nuclear disarmament and against the Vietnam War. Russell was married four times and had three children; he died of bronchitis in Wales shortly before his ninety-eighth birthday.

Russell’s Political Thought

Russell’s politics were originally liberal, and he maintained his concern for individual freedom and conscience throughout his career, but he became a Guild Socialist during World War I, an affiliation that continued into the 1920s. Later, in the 1960s, he abandoned the Labour Party and became a (non-Marxist) “New Leftist.” Generally sympathetic to the poor, but opposed to Marxism and Bolshevism, Russell supported the decentralized egalitarianism of the Guild system, although systematic programs were never his preference. Even his most philosophical politics book, *Human Society in Ethics and Politics*, was relatively polemical because he did not believe that moral judgments could bear the standards of objectivity that other branches of philosophy enjoyed, although he tried to avoid pure relativism. Russell’s pacifism was consequentialist, rather than absolute, for he supported World War II, while his social politics involved advocacy of female emancipation, opposition to strict divorce laws, qualified support for progressive education, and severe hostility to organized religions. He was also an advocate of world government, although he assumed that this would probably arise from the hegemony of a “Great Power,” as opposed to a democratic campaign for peace.

Russell’s influences are many. According to many experts, Russell virtually invented modern analytical philosophy (the theoretical reconciliation of natural language, formal logic, mathematics, and physics), and there is broad consensus that this aspect of his work was inspired by the Italian logician Giuseppe Peano, the German mathematician Gottlob Frege, and Russell’s fellow Cambridge philosophers George Edward (G. E.) Moore and Alfred North Whitehead, as well as the American realist philosopher

William James. However, the sources of Russell's political views—other than his own experiences and interpretations of contemporary events—are more problematic. John Stuart Mill, the early-modern Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza, and the twentieth-century social scientist G. D. H. Cole are usually mentioned with reference to the liberal and socialist aspects of Russell's career. His cynical attitude toward actually existing governments owed something to Niccolò Machiavelli, while his inspirational assumption—that politics and ethics cannot and should not be separated—was part of a tradition that began with the ancient Greeks and, in particular, with Aristotle.

Clive E. Hill

See also [Feminism](#); [Guild Socialism](#); [Liberalism](#); [Mill, John Stuart](#); [Pacifism](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Power](#); [Radicalism](#); [Socialism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Abbott Gleason Abbott Gleason

Russian Political Thought

Russian political thought

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Russian Political Thought

All European high culture, most especially that which could be called “political,” rests fundamentally on the twin pillars of classical antiquity and Christianity, but the different European national variants took shape at different times and derived from different aspects of both classical and Christian traditions. Some traditions of political writing and thinking, like those of England and France, may be traced back to the later Middle Ages. The political thought produced in Eastern Europe, on the other hand, is much more recent in development and its outlines more difficult to discern. This is partly because so much of this writing derives from the less studied evolution of the Orthodox (Eastern) religious tradition or, at any rate, has been marked by it. The political element within the world long dominated by Eastern Orthodox Christianity is altogether less specific and articulated than comparable developments further west and of much more recent date. Orthodox tradition was Platonic and aesthetic, with a definite aversion toward the Aristotelian and hence toward the rationalism so characteristic of Euro-American modernity. This is particularly true of Russia, with its vast, rural spaces, shifting frontiers and imperial pretensions. Until the second half of the seventeenth century, all public forms of “political thinking” took place in an arena dominated by the Church.

The traditional position that Russia’s specifically political thought began with Peter the Great (1682–1725) will be respected here. What has been described as “Muscovite political culture” consists of generally diffuse, and occasionally very specific, tendencies toward secrecy and facades. It

expresses in part the pessimism of a vast and poor realm, stretching far from the centers of Europe, but not connected in any deep way to the civilized centers of East Asia, and its provenance is mired in controversy.

The reign of Peter the Great inaugurated Russia's direct involvement in the increasingly secular culture of early modern Europe. As Russia's political interest shifted away from the steppe frontier toward its western borders, Tsar Peter discovered that Russia lacked the ability to compete geopolitically with European nations; his realization of Russia's military weakness led to larger understandings of how culture underlay specific sources of West European strength. Trying to introduce these sources of strength into his native realm, he produced policies entailing a crude form of mercantilism, a commitment to industrialization, and an attempt to end the domination of the Orthodox Church over domestic life. Central to this effort was the ending of the Russian Patriarchate and the creation of a state-dominated framework (the Holy Synod) to govern the Russian Church.

The eighteenth century may be broadly understood as "the Russian Enlightenment," a very top-down affair. Until the early nineteenth century, the ruler and the court remained the cultural center of Russia, ruling by decree under Peter and somewhat more through the power of fashion, emulation, and persuasion as the century wore on. The Petrine reforms had a direct impact on only the top one or two percent of the population, but all Russians, even the enserfed and the peasantry, were affected. The imperial court, of course, was a very different place under Peter than it had been under his predecessors. It almost completely reversed its previous position as the linchpin of tradition, becoming the center of cultural innovation, a development already underway, if imperceptibly, before Peter came to power. The Petrine Westernizing impulse at court came to an end in the reign of Alexander I (1800–25).

In large part because of the "Northern War" with Sweden, the Europe that Russia became part of during Peter's reign was, indeed, northern and Protestant. Russia's largely unarticulated political institutions were reformed along Swedish lines, and the Patriarch was replaced by synodal government. St. Petersburg, the new capital, symbolized the distilled ambitions of eighteenth-century Russian rulers, above all those of Peter and

Catherine the Great. With Peter on the throne, the city's planning models were Dutch, its architectural models were all West European, and the buildings were created by a succession of West European masters, French, Italian, and English. Its physical forms "represented the ideas of power, order and reason" (Dorontchenkov 2009, 130).

Feofan Prokopovich, probably Peter's most important adviser on intellectual and cultural matters, wavered initially between Catholicism and Orthodoxy but quickly realized which side his bread was buttered on and took service with Peter. Ukrainian born and an intellectual eclectic, his theology was initially Catholic and scholastic, his political impulses authoritarian and Protestant, and his intellectual bent classical and imperial. His writings on absolutism (*Justice Is the Monarch's Will*) and his Funeral Oration on Peter the Great were the best known of his many works. His *Spiritual Regulation* established the governing framework for the Orthodox Church.

The most important writer on political subjects in the second half of the eighteenth century was undoubtedly the Empress herself. Catherine the Great was a woman of extraordinary vitality, in her cultural ambitions and in her quest for power, both at home and abroad. Peter had put the German philosopher J. G. von Leibniz on his payroll, but Catherine topped him with Voltaire and Denis Diderot. Her interest in French culture and its greatest representatives was legendary; the most important indication of her passion for advanced ideas was her famous correspondence with Voltaire, which lasted from the time she came to the throne (1762) until he died in 1778. She was also a particular admirer of the French *philosophes*, Diderot and Jean Le Rond d'Alembert.

Catherine's Instruction (*Nakaz*) was a justification of absolute monarchy, based on the political theory of the Enlightenment, and a description of how the state should be governed. Autocracy was justified on the grounds of efficiency and effectiveness. Russia was proclaimed to be a European state and her subjects citizens. Laws were to conform to the rational order of nature, rather than being determined by historical evolution or tradition. The aim of legislation was to conduct the people to "the greatest good,"

language reminiscent of Jeremy Bentham, who was in fact an honored visitor to Catherine's Russia.

Two important books lay behind the occasionally confused and repetitive verbiage of Catherine's *Nakaz*. One of them was Charles-Louis Montesquieu's famous *Spirit of the Laws*. The other was Cesare Beccaria's *Treatise on Crimes and Punishments*, one of the milestones in the development of modern criminal law doctrines and procedures. Catherine was indebted to Beccaria for her ideas as to the purpose of legislation and for specifics, like the abolition of judicial torture. To Montesquieu she owed her conviction that unlimited monarchy could be made "rational" and for the idea that what he called "intermediate bodies" between the sovereign and her subjects were a desirable check on arbitrary rule.

Throughout the eighteenth century, the elite (with a few notable exceptions) followed the court, identifying with Peter, his reforms, and his drastically European orientation. Around the turn of the nineteenth century, however, doubts began to surface. Ironically, Catherine's efforts to incite cultural activity among her subjects, newly promoted to citizens, contributed to new points of view, increasingly unwelcome in the capital. The Freemason Nikolai Novikov, while remaining "Western" in his overall outlook, began to take an interest in the populations of the Russian Empire and how Russian society was constituted. He also came to feel some violation of filial piety in the relentless glorification of Peter's reforms. Russia's old ways, the ancestral ways, were being slighted. Speaking to just this point, Prince Mikhail Shcherbatov produced the unpublishable anti-autocratic tract, *On the Corruption of Morals in Russia*. And ultimately the litterateur and historian Nikolai Karamzin spoke of Petersburg as having been built on "tears and corpses" because of the abruptness and violence of Peter's break with the past.

The Napoleonic wars brought many Russian aristocrats in direct contact with Western Europe, which previously they had known largely from books. Their so-called Decembrist Revolt brought Peter's admiration for Western cultures to a preliminary climax, while turning the force of revolt against the failing commitment of tsar and court to Westernization and constitutionalism. When these issues reemerged as central to Russian

culture in the late 1830s, however, the torch had passed to that remarkable band of rebels that came to be known as “the intelligentsia” and that included a sprinkling of people from less exalted social positions.

Romanticism held increasing sway in Russian culture, and the intelligentsia was becoming obsessed with Russia’s future. In 1835, Alexander Pushkin’s solitary and philosophically minded friend, Peter Chaadaev, published his remarkable “Philosophical Letter to a Lady” in a Moscow periodical. The resulting impact was later described as “a pistol shot in the dark night.” In the decade after the defeat of the Decembrist rebels, Chaadaev had come to believe the heretical proposition that the classical and Christian world—of which Rome was the center—was the true locus of historical development in the cosmos. Russia had been cut off from that world since the Middle Ages. The inevitable result was that Russia—having neither learned anything from Europe nor having contributed anything to its development—had no real history and remained, as Chaadaev memorably put it, standing “with one foot in the air.”

The result of Chaadaev’s shocking diatribe was the crystallization of a new point of view, which came to be called Slavophilism. The Slavophiles, of whom the two most important were Aleksei Stepanovich Khomiakov and Ivan Vasil’evich Kireevsky, came into existence as a group to combat Chaadaev’s dismissal of Russian history and culture. Strikingly, the Slavophiles accepted some of Chaadaev’s distinctions between what soon became known as “Russia and the West,” but they reversed the values that Chaadaev ascribed to each. The Catholic West became the bearer of rationalism, legalism, and hierarchy. Its dialectical opposite, Protestantism, stood for unbridled individualism and boundless subjectivity. The Russian Church, by contrast, had preserved the “conciliarism” (*sobornost*) of early Christianity; the Roman Catholic Church, deeply influenced by Aristotelianism and Roman rationalism, had taken the road to hierarchy and ultimately papal despotism. Although the Russian upper class had been deeply corrupted by Peter the Great’s Westernism, the Russian peasantry was largely untouched by Western ways and still believed in the collectivity of true Christianity, despite the coarseness and poverty of their daily lives. The history of “the West,” therefore, although marked by the achievement of unprecedented material wealth and power, was fundamentally un-Christian, even godless, while Russia, although thrown off course by

Western influences, was still in a position to save her soul by returning to “the good old ways.”

The Slavophile critique of “the West” had a decisive influence on all pre-Soviet Russian culture, particularly those segments of it that pertained to politics. Slavophilism, in its initial formulation, was about history and culture, not about politics. The “Panslavism” that briefly emerged as a major school of thought during the 1870s and early 1880s turned the political indifferentism of the Slavophiles into a fierce hostility to Russia’s contemporary political rivals in Europe—particularly to those that spoke German. And in the early twentieth century, a Russian nationalism emerged that kept a crude version of a few core Slavophile ideas but otherwise spoke in imperial terms.

The intellectual force that contested neo-Slavophile and nationalist currents for intellectual leadership in late imperial Russia was of course Marxism. In the First International, Michael Bakunin’s anarchism challenged Karl Marx’s doctrines for personal hegemony head on. Subsequently, however, the Russian intellectual, George Plekhanov, although living in exile after 1881, became an important figure in European Marxism. It was principally against Plekhanov’s rather mainstream European Marxism that Vladimir Il’ich Lenin developed his Bolshevism. Its distinctiveness lay in its view that because of the weakness of the bourgeoisie in Russia, the industrial proletariat might—in alliance with the Russian peasantry—skip the capitalist stage of development and proceed directly to socialism. To accomplish this feat, Lenin developed the idea of a vanguard political party that would lead the Revolution and ensure that significant figures in the movement did not succumb to a purely economic struggle for better wages and working conditions, or to other forms of liberalism.

Precisely why the Russian Revolution developed in such an extremely authoritarian direction has been a matter of great controversy, with some scholars crediting the dogmatism of the Bolsheviks and their readiness to employ violence as the root cause, and others pointing to the violence and hardships of the Russian Revolution and Civil War as having damaged the democratic possibilities of the Russian Left, forcing the Bolsheviks in particular into more extreme positions.

The Soviet experience, although rich in the annals of utopian hopes and of human suffering and degradation, is poor in writing about politics; the more interesting Marxists writing about politics has been by Hungarians, Italians, and Germans. The life of Stalin, however, has a great deal to teach the student of modern politics, almost all of it thoroughly chastening. Russian politics between 1925 and 1955 combined the dreadful toll caused by the struggle with Germany with a massive commitment to accelerated economic development that eventually left the post-Stalin Soviet Union unable to compete internationally with the more nimble capitalist polities of Western Europe and the United States. The collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s led to further suffering for the inhabitants of the Soviet Union after the illusory stability of the Brezhnev period. Russia today, much reduced in power and influence, to be sure, still occupies a space sometimes called Eurasia, still culturally illiberal, her economy increasingly “colonial,” under an authoritarian crony capitalist government.

Abbott Gleason

See also [Bentham, Jeremy](#); [Communism, Varieties of](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [French Enlightenment](#); [Kropotkin, Peter A.](#); [Lenin and Leninism](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Montesquieu, Baron de](#); [Nationalism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Revolution](#); [Russian Revolution, Political Thought of the](#); [Stalin and Stalinism](#); [Trotsky, Leon](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Concepts of revolution in Russia became very diverse very rapidly in the 1860s among a small group of intellectuals who were disappointed by the limited nature of the reforms of the period, the most important of which was the abolition of serfdom in 1861. The main motivation was a moral one, going back to the works of earlier intellectuals, notably Alexander Radishchev, who wrote one of the earliest critiques of Russian society in *A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow* (1790), which chronicled the hardships of the peasantry. Radishchev's statement, that he could not be indifferent while others suffered, stands as the founding statement of Russian revolutionary thought. From the 1860s, the term *narodnichestvo* (populism), derived from the word *narod* (the people), was applied to the movement. Initially, following the teachings of Peter Lavrov, who argued for political education as the way to achieve revolution, hundreds of students went out into the countryside in 1873 and 1876 to preach revolution to the peasantry, but the peasants did not respond. Other revolutionary models at that time included those associated with the anarchist Michael Bakunin, who prioritized the struggle against the state and the church; Sergei Nechaev, who wrote the infamous *Catechism of a Revolutionary* (1869), which called on followers to cut all social ties to pursue "the single passion, revolution"; and Nikolai Chernyshevsky, whose widely influential novel *What Is to Be Done? Stories of the New People* (1863), depicted a utopian communal existence.

The failure of the “going to the people” in the mid-1870s led a breakaway group to argue that only terrorism would be effective as it would demonstrate the vulnerability of the oppressors. From 1878 to 1881, numerous attacks were made on people and targets associated with the autocracy, culminating in March 1881 in the assassination of Tsar Alexander II. The attempt failed in its prime objective of encouraging a mass uprising among the peasants, although it did cause the government to become more repressive and to aggressively “Russify” the Empire, policies that contributed to the eventual revolution. Once again, failure caused a reevaluation led by Georgii Plekhanov who began to argue, following Karl Marx, that the populists had chosen the wrong revolutionary class. Although insignificant in Russia in the early 1880s, it was, Plekhanov argued, the working class that was destined to grow as capitalism and industrialization spread and to lead the future revolution. The three main tendencies of Russian revolutionary thought—populism, Marxism, and anarchism—had emerged. The initial “populist” impulse of serving the people remained fundamental to all of them. Populism can be considered the mother lode of Russian revolutionary thought.

Populism and the Socialist Revolutionary Movement

The various informal political tendencies began to form themselves into political parties around 1900. They were forced to set up abroad or in secrecy within Russia. The populist tendency coalesced into the Socialist Revolutionary Party (SRs) in 1901. It was the most widely supported party in the Russian Empire and remained so until its dissolution by the Soviet government, getting about twice as many votes (around 45 percent) as the ruling Bolsheviks (around 25 percent) in the only free election of the period (for the Constituent Assembly in November 1917). At the heart of its philosophy was the belief that landowner land should be transferred to the peasantry. Their ideas and policies were not focused exclusively on peasants. They also organized among Russia’s growing number of factory workers, most of whom were migrants from the countryside. The SRs at this time were also distinctive in continuing to embrace a philosophy of terrorism. Alongside the more open political wing it also operated a

“Combat Organization” that conducted numerous terrorist acts against tsarist targets, helping to build the tension prior to and during the 1905 Revolution.

Despite being bitterly opposed to the Social Democratic Party, the SRs were also heavily influenced by Marxism. In fact, it was a populist economist named Nikolai Danielson who completed the first translation of *Das Kapital* into Russian. Danielson remained in correspondence with Marx, as did other populists, until Marx’s death. The question they raised was, could Russia—with its precapitalist economic formations, shortage of capital, constricted markets, high production costs (not least in combating the bitter climate), and traditions of communal peasant land ownership and urban co-operative workshops—avoid capitalism and go straight to socialism? Marx, in two carefully worded letters in 1878 and 1881, conceded that it might be possible. Mainstream populist economists differed over the issue. Some, like V. P. Vorontsov, thought Russian capitalism was a nonstarter because of its disadvantages. Others, like N. M. Mikhailovsky, believed capitalism could develop but that it was possible to preempt it by a leap into socialism. Danielson believed there was already some capitalist development, but it could be foreshortened. All, in various ways, believed Russia would not have to undergo the full agony of a whole era of capitalist development. Populists envisaged a future socialist Russia based on communal peasant agriculture and small-scale industrial co-operatives.

The defeat of the 1905 Revolution led to a long lull in revolutionary activities that resumed with a vengeance in 1917. From the outset, populists were attracted to soviets and tended to hold majorities in many of them. However, the party began to split under the tensions and complexities of the combined world war and revolution. Deeming it impossible to immediately distribute the land under wartime conditions, the party leaders were drawn out of soviets and into the provisional government in the belief that all antimonarchist forces should defend the February revolution and keep the external enemy at bay. However, the party left, including one of its most prominent politicians, Victor Chernov, could see the damage this was doing to the party and urged rapid transfer of land. Therefore, when the Bolsheviks came to power, they “stole”

SR policy and approved the self-transfer of land being spontaneously undertaken by peasants at that moment. Chernov had a deep mistrust of Bolshevik aims, but much of the left split from the SR leadership and formed a militant left-SR party that was in coalition with the Bolsheviks from November 1917 to March 1918 when they resigned rather than sign the catastrophic Brest-Litovsk peace treaty with Germany. The SRs attempted a half-hearted uprising against the Soviet government in July 1918 after which they were suppressed. A group of leaders was put on trial in 1922 in the first Soviet political show trial. Fifteen were sentenced to death, but the sentences were commuted. However, populism never recovered.

Social Democratic Marxism—Mensheviks and Bolsheviks

Social Democratic Marxism differed from populism in emphasizing the role of workers in leading the revolution. Social Democrats also criticized populism for its romantic depiction of the heroic revolutionary, especially the self-sacrificing terrorist. Instead, Social Democrats tended to stress the structural and scientific nature of Marxist theory in which history swept along irrespective of the individual. By the time Vladimir Lenin (1870–1924) began to emerge as a Marxist, the Revisionist controversy, driven by the question of why no workers' revolution had taken place by the late 1890s, was dominating Marxist thought. Picking a path between populism and revisionism, Lenin addressed the problem by developing two major adaptations of Marxism to Russian conditions, that is, to its situation of political unfreedom and restricted development of capitalism. In his pamphlet *What Is to Be Done?* (1902), he argued that the absence of an organized party was crucial. He argued that the German Social Democratic Party model from its underground phase should be followed. At first, the pamphlet was accepted as a brilliant contribution to orthodox Marxist thinking. It was only when Lenin began to use ruthless tactics to get his way in the embryonic party at its Second Congress (1903) that the potential authoritarianism in Lenin's conceptions began to attract criticism. A group suggesting a less centralized form of party opposed Lenin. There followed 14 years of argument between the Menshevik (minority) and Bolshevik

(majority) factions in which it is difficult to discern clear and consistent ideological differences. Constant attempts were made to reunite the factions even well into 1917. Lenin was determined to keep them apart. Lenin's second adaptation was to stress the international nature of the revolution. Russia, as one of capitalism's weakest links, might start the international revolution, but it stood no chance of success in "backward" Russia without the help of successful revolutions in Germany and/or France and Britain. Lenin developed this notion in *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916).

By 1917, as his attention began to turn to problems of transition to socialism, Lenin had made a third adaptation of Marxism, inspired this time by Rudolf Hilferding's views on *Finance Capital* (1910). Hilferding argued that capitalism had become an organized system. Managers controlled banks that, in turn, controlled investment flows. Managers also controlled large companies that themselves were moving away from the market toward monopolies and cartels. Lenin identified this as a revolutionary opportunity. In the first instance, one could simply behead the system by nationalizing the banks and a future socialist government would be able to control capitalism and coerce it toward socialism. His *April Theses* (1917) and his unfinished *State and Revolution* (written in 1917, published in 1918)—which compared running a modern economy to the routine of the German Post Office, requiring only simple skills within the compass of the average working man or woman—embodied this as a fundamental feature of his strategy for transition to socialism in 1917.

The final twists and turns in Lenin's thought were driven by the failure of successive transition strategies. The "simple" beheading of capitalism did not work as bankers, capitalists, and others preferred fight or flight to subordination to the Soviet government, forcing a change of direction in spring 1918. Lenin turned to a second strategy, the idea of "iron proletarian discipline" in factory and society, extensive state control and planning of the economy, plus defense of the Russian revolution at all costs, even retreat to the Urals, in order to maintain a possible starting point for revolutions elsewhere. The term "war communism," conventionally applied to these policies, conceals their close similarity to what was later known as "socialism in one country." In 1920–21, this strategy also failed in that the

deep opposition of peasants to forced grain requisitioning meant a third strategy was needed. A tax in kind replaced forced requisition, and partial market relations were restored. Lenin waxed lyrical in his last articles, saying that experience had brought the revolution to a theoretically unpredicted place, one of socialist political control over a society lacking the economic and social “preconditions” for socialism. Lenin argued that the missing preconditions would be constructed by the political authorities guided by Marxist theory. Lenin had died by the time this third transition strategy had begun to fail, and Stalin picked up where the second strategy had left off and turned it into what is commonly known as “socialism in one country,” that is, adapting, not least by vastly extending the control of state and party over society, and waiting until the revolution spread.

The main non-Leninist political theories of the revolutionary period involved Leon Trotsky and Menshevism. Trotsky had developed a theory known as “permanent revolution” in the early twentieth century. In essence, it stated that in Russian conditions, it would not be necessary for there to be an extended capitalist stage of development because, although the working class was weak in Russia, the ruling class was relatively weaker and divided. The nascent bourgeoisie had not attained maturity and strong social hegemony as it had in more advanced capitalist nations. Nonetheless, the Russian revolution would only succeed as part of a world revolution that undermined capitalism in general. Trotsky strongly opposed the theory of socialism in one country. He attributed the domination of the Russian Communist Party by Stalin to bureaucratic degeneration brought about by having too many careerist administrators and too few class-conscious workers in the leading party positions. Most Mensheviks, on the other hand, believed it was not possible under any circumstances for the capitalist stage to be skipped. Only as capitalism developed and eventually decayed, they argued, could the necessary preconditions for socialism—a strong, class-conscious proletariat and an industry capable of producing an abundance of goods—be achieved. In their view, the Russian revolution was “premature.”

Finally, outside the Marxist tradition altogether was a small but at times influential group of anarchists. Apart from the fundamental sharing of opposition to any and all state structures in favor of direct, participative self-government, the movement had little in common. One of the largest

groups was composed of pacifists who followed the teachings of Leo Tolstoy. Peter Kropotkin argued for a decentralized, stateless society based on co-operatives. Other anarchist groups advocated violence as a necessary revolutionary tool, and some embraced terrorism as the only way for revolution to progress under Russian conditions.

Christopher Read

See also [Anarchism](#); [Bakunin, Michael](#); [Communism, Varieties of](#); [Dictatorship of the Proletariat](#); [Empire and Political Thought](#); [Lenin and Leninism](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Populism](#); [Revolution](#); [Socialism](#); [Stalin and Stalinism](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Terrorism](#); [Tolstoy, Leo](#); [Totalitarianism](#); [Trotsky, Leon](#); [Utopianism](#)

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Claude-Henri de Rouvroy, Comte de Saint-Simon (1760–1825), is acknowledged as a forerunner of socialism, industrialism, positivism, and sociology. His philosophic works, which commenced in 1798, emerged as a synthetic response to contested social, political, and intellectual terrains not limited to the Protestant Reformation; the Enlightenment; the French and Industrial revolutions; the rise of individualism, democracy, and the mercantilist middle class; imperial competition and warfare; and the use of arbitrary and discretionary power by the church and state. Among his most significant works were *Lettres d'un habitant de Genève* (1803), *Introduction aux Travaux Scientifiques du XIX Siècle* (1807–08), *De la Réorganisation de la Société Européenne* (1814), and *Nouveau Christianisme* (1825).

During his first 40 years, Saint-Simon received a rural education in classical literature, which was complemented by an encyclopedic training in Enlightenment philosophy in Paris, and culminated in the rejection of theism in the 1770s. He fought in the American War of Independence from 1779 to 1782, rising to the rank of colonel. He soon became disillusioned with warfare and undertook the coordination of infrastructural projects in Mexico and Spain. After these fruitless ventures, he returned to France in 1793 to speculate in properties confiscated by the First French Republic.

His earliest published works appearing from 1803 were unsystematic but synthesized the works of the Marquis de Condorcet and Joseph de Maistre.

Calling for a subscription of funds, Saint-Simon wished to organize a council of international intellectuals to unify the sciences based on Isaac Newton's law of gravitation. With the purpose of forming a progressively modifiable scientific doctrine to validate their authority as the leaders of a "Religion of Newton," savants would replace the waning authority of the Catholic Church, guiding intellectual and social progress. Property-owning industrialists would take the temporal power and supplant the absolute rule of kings. The rise of these new powers would direct the transition to a peaceful industrial system, or a positive era. During his 1814 collaborations with Augustin Thierry, Saint-Simon emphasized that an intellectual elite could form a parliamentary organization to arbitrate international peace processes.

Motivated to shape public opinion on science, industry, and economics, he founded the journal *L'Industrie*, which promoted the liberal economic theories of Jean-Baptiste Say and Benjamin Constant. It appeared from 1816 to 1818, ceasing when subscribers reacted negatively to the proposition that universal morality was possible under the direction of new spiritual and temporal realms: science and industry. Among Saint-Simon's succeeding publications, *L'Organisateur* of 1819–20 also proved controversial, as it questioned the utility of idle Bourbon royalty, which he juxtaposed to the exertions of scientists, industrialists, and laborers contributing to the prosperity of France.

By the early 1820s, he had already elaborated on his newly planned industrial economy as consisting of three branches. Within this system, a creative class of artists and engineers were positioned to envision cultural and industrial schemes, a scientific class would scrutinize the feasibility of such plans and administer education, while an industrial class would direct workers and manage the realization of industrial projects. During the year of Saint-Simon's death, three publications, notably *Nouveau Christianisme* (1825), appeared. The unfinished piece criticized ancient institutions for demoralizing humankind. Saint-Simon called all to uphold the Golden Rule as a return to the spirit of Christianity. The work was consistent with his proposals to establish a merit-based society administered by a republican elite, and gauged by the social sciences. It made no concession to inherited

wealth, privilege, or warfare. As it would tend to the poorest class first, democratic processes were unnecessary.

His followers, the Saint-Simonians, would eventually transform his philosophy into a religious creed and promote a socialistic interpretation of his economic system. They were also indebted to the works of Charles Fourier and used the word *socialisme* to define their moral creed. These developments led Karl Marx to label Saint-Simon a “utopian socialist” for contending that morality could foster class cooperation, as contrasted to his propagation of the dualist class conflicts of political and revolutionary “scientific socialism.” John Stuart Mill, however, would build on Saint-Simonian ideas of egalitarianism, particularly in relation to the restriction of inheritance rights.

Despite the fact that Saint-Simon’s most famous follower, Auguste Comte, had defected from his lead in 1824 as a result of his differing estimations of the positive era, he would play a critical role in systematizing and promoting the potentialities of industrial reorganization. Comte developed a classification of the sciences in the six-volume *Cours de philosophie positive* (1830–42) with the purpose of substantiating a new science of sociology. This work served as the basis of the four-volume *Système de politique positive* (1848–54), which detailed a scheme for transitioning to a pacific confederation of industrial city-states that tend to the needs of society via Positivist sociology. The principles of this work, particularly its details for a “Religion of Humanity,” played a formidable role in Victorian civic reconstruction as promoted by various members of the British Positivist Society, and later the Sociological Society. Prominent members of these civic institutions included Richard Congreve, Frederic Harrison, J. H. Bridges, S. H. Swinny, Patrick Geddes, and Victor Branford.

Matthew Wilson

See also [Communism](#), [Varieties of](#); [Comte, Auguste](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Liberalism](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Mill, John Stuart](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Positivism](#); [Progress](#); [Socialism](#)

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During his lifetime, Jean-Paul Sartre was often described as a “guide to a generation.” With his thick-rimmed glasses, his ubiquitous dangling cigarette, and his practice of frequenting the cafés on the Boulevard Saint-Germain in Paris, he appeared to be the quintessential “committed intellectual,” using his writing and his name to take a stand on all the major issues that defined the French intellectual and political scene from the 1940s to the 1980s. However, Sartre’s politics were far from consistent. Although he remained committed to certain ideals, in particular to a certain existential Marxism, his political views were continually evolving and adapting to new contexts and new paradigms. As Sartre’s biographer Annie Cohen-Solal (2005) put it, Sartre’s political thought is best understood, not so much as a uniform doctrine or body of work, but as a “way of doing things,” as an “ethical compass.” The most important thing, Sartre reminded us, was to “think against oneself.”

Born in 1905 in a Parisian bourgeois family, Sartre’s political awakening came late. During the 1920s, he studied philosophy at the *École Normale Supérieure*, where his peers included Georges Canguilhem, Raymond Aron, and Paul Nizan, who introduced him to politics. In 1929, while studying for the *agrégation*, Sartre also met another philosopher, Simone de Beauvoir, who became his lifelong companion. Sartre’s early philosophical interest was in phenomenology, in particular in the work of Edmund Husserl, whom he discovered through Emmanuel Lévinas. For Sartre, phenomenology

offered the possibility of placing real-life experience—the “concrete”—at the heart of philosophical reflection.

In 1938, Sartre published his first novel, *Nausea*, in which he exposed some of his earliest philosophical ideas. *Nausea* recounts the internal turmoil of Antoine Roquentin, an ordinary man who wrestles with the absurdity and contingency of his existence. Although this realization leads Roquentin to a loss of direction and sense of self, to a vertiginous “nausea,” it is ultimately an empowering experience. Stripped of any predetermined structures, Roquentin comes to understand that he is a pure consciousness and, as such, that he is essentially free. Existence, as Sartre famously put it, precedes essence.

In *Being and Nothingness*, published in 1943, Sartre continued to develop his theory of existentialism. He pursued his critique of determinism and insisted on the centrality of freedom of both action and consciousness. In the face of the subject’s new-found freedom, Sartre preached authenticity, a disposition also involving self-reflexivity and self-criticism. The denial of freedom, Sartre argued, led to “bad faith,” to self-deception and *ressentiment* (resentment). The choice of freedom for oneself and for others ultimately led to political commitment, which Sartre came to embrace fully after World War II.

In June 1940, Sartre was captured by the Germans and sent to a work camp. This experience was crucial not only for his philosophical trajectory, as he was developing the main themes of *Being and Nothingness* during the war, but also for his political engagement. In 1941, Sartre founded the underground Resistance group “Socialisme et liberté” along with Beauvoir, Jean Pouillon, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. The group was short-lived, but it solidified Sartre’s friendship with Merleau-Ponty, who, along with Aron, Jean Paulhan, and others, collaborated with Sartre and Beauvoir on their journal, *Les Temps Modernes*. As its 1945 mission statement made clear, *Les Temps Modernes* sought to “change man’s social condition and the conception he had of himself.” Its purpose was to militate “in favor of the person *and* the socialist revolution.”

Throughout the Cold War, Sartre’s relationship to communism was complicated. In 1948, he founded the *Rassemblement démocratique*

révolutionnaire, a group seeking to forge a “third way” between capitalism and communism that Sartre promptly quit after discovering that it was financed by American intelligence bodies. After the Korean War, he became a “fellow traveler” of the Communist Party. In a 1952 article titled “The Communists and Peace,” he denounced the “vicious rats of anticommunism” and embraced the Leninist vision of the party as vanguard of the revolutionary movement and as the objective expression of the proletariat. Around this time, Merleau-Ponty quit the editorial board of *Les Temps Modernes* because of Sartre’s “ultra-Bolshevik voluntarism.” Sartre’s embrace of the Communist Party was also at the origin of his split with fellow existentialist Albert Camus, with whom he had previously been close.

In the late 1950s, Sartre grew increasingly critical of the French Communist Party (PCF). In 1956, he denounced the brutal repression of the Hungarian Revolution and declared himself in favor of Algerian independence, which the PCF opposed. Yet, in 1960, Sartre published the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, a massive treatise attempting to reconcile the Marxist revolutionary project with the existentialist emphasis on individual freedom. In the *Critique*, Sartre revised the analysis of freedom developed in *Being and Nothingness* by arguing that the individual could not become intentional or historically meaningful except as part of a collective, a “group-in-fusion.”

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Sartre moved to the left of the PCF. In 1964, he became the first laureate to refuse the Nobel Prize, doing so to avoid being “transformed into an institution.” In May 1968, he supported the French student revolt, once again breaking with the PCF. Sartre also enthusiastically embraced the Maoist students, whom he described as “moral revolutionaries,” as a quintessential group-in-fusion. Sartre’s closest interlocutors during the last years of his life were members of the Maoist group *La Gauche prolétarienne* (GP). When their newspaper, *La Cause du peuple*, threatened to disappear, Sartre and Beauvoir distributed it in the streets of Paris. In 1973, Sartre co-founded the left-leaning newspaper *Libération*. In 1974, Benny Lévy, the ex-director of the GP, became Sartre’s private secretary, a position he held until Sartre’s death. In April 1980, more than 50,000 people followed Sartre’s funeral procession in the streets of

Paris to mourn one of the most important and influential intellectuals of the twentieth century.

Camille Robcis

See also [Communism, Varieties of](#); [Empire and Political Thought](#); [French Political Thought](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Mao Zedong](#); [Revolution](#); [Socialism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Rory Rowan Rory Rowan

Schmitt, Carl

Schmitt, Carl

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Schmitt, Carl

The German jurist Carl Schmitt (1888–1985) was one of the twentieth century's most influential and controversial conservative thinkers. Schmitt understood himself to live in period of profound crisis in which existing forms of authority were rapidly crumbling. This led him to focus his work on fundamental questions concerning the foundations of political order and the nature of legitimacy in constitutional and international law. Although best known as a trenchant critic of liberalism, his work centered on attempts to theorize effective forms of political authority capable of containing disorder. In *Political Theology* (1922), he famously defined sovereignty as the capacity to decide on the state of exception. Although this decision secured order, it located sovereign power above and beyond the norms of the existing legal system. In keeping with his claim that all modern concepts of state were secularized theological concepts, Schmitt compared this extra-legal sovereign decision with the religious miracle.

In his most widely read book, *The Concept of the Political* (1927), Schmitt argued that the political sphere was defined by the relationship between friend and enemy. As a result of humankind's conflictual nature, enmity was an inescapable part of human existence; the task of political order was to regulate it. In Schmitt's view, liberalism failed to recognize this antagonistic dimension of the political and attempted to displace political differences into the supposedly neutral spheres of morality and economics. During the 1920s, he developed an authoritarian theory of democracy that he hoped could revitalize a state weakened by liberal neutralizations. He

argued that insofar as democracy assumed the identity of ruler and ruled, it required homogeneity, and was therefore sharply at odds with liberal pluralism. Taking Benito Mussolini as an example, he claimed that the democratic will of the people was perfectly compatible with dictatorship. It was the desire to fuse strong state authority with a unified, homogeneous political community that drew Schmitt to join the National Socialists in 1933.

From the late 1930s, Schmitt focused on questions of international order. He attacked the growing influence of universal categories in international law, arguing that they were used by powerful states, notably the United States, to pursue their particular interests in the name of all. In his key late work, *The Nomos of the Earth* (1950), Schmitt claimed that all order rested on a unity of law and space that had unraveled with the collapse of Eurocentric world order. He regarded the core task of twentieth-century political thought to identify a new global spatial order, although his own proposals for a multipolar world order remained compromised by association with Nazi foreign policy.

It is particularly difficult to separate Schmitt's political thought from his entanglement in political affairs. During the final years of the Weimar Republic, his arguments for an authoritarian presidency that could unify a country divided between extremes of Left and Right found favor in the conservative circles around the Papen and Schleicher chancellorships and led him to defend the Reich government in the Constitutional Court. Although he initially opposed the National Socialists, Schmitt quickly aligned himself with the party after Hitler's appointment as chancellor in January 1933, accepting a number of prominent positions in academia and the legal establishment. Despite his enthusiastic attempts to provide theoretical legitimacy to Nazi policies, he had largely been marginalized by 1936. He nonetheless went on to theorize the expansion of the Nazi Reich as laying the grounds for a new system of international law based on a number of *Grossraume* ("large spaces") that would eclipse nation-states. In the wake of German defeat, these writings led to Schmitt's arrest and interrogation in Nuremberg by U.S. forces. Although he was released without charge, Schmitt was banned from holding academic posts in Germany and lived the remainder of his life as an ostracized figure in the

small town of his birth, from where he continued to publish and carry out extensive correspondence with leading European intellectuals.

Schmitt's work has had a wide and varied influence in a number of national contexts and across the political spectrum. His thought has been a key influence within conservative thought in postwar Germany and more broadly on the New Left and New Right in Europe since the 1960s, influencing thinkers as diverse as Giorgio Agamben, Alain de Benoist, Jürgen Habermas, and Gianfranco Miglio. Since the 1980s, Schmitt's impact on Anglophone debate has grown enormously, most notably during the last decade when his critique of liberal world order became a common reference point in international relations debates around the changing nature of sovereignty in a globalized world. The question of how to assess the relationship between his work and his Nazism has been a persistent source of controversy. Although some have maintained that Schmitt's involvement with the regime can be distinguished from his theoretical insights, others have argued that his choices were informed by a deep-seated anti-Semitism integral to his political thought.

Rory Rowan

See also [Constitutionalism](#); [German Political Thought](#); [International Law](#); [International Relations Theory and Political Thought](#); [Law and Political Thought](#); [Legitimacy](#); [Liberalism](#); [National Socialism](#); [Pluralism](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Sovereignty, State](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Strauss, Leo](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [War and Political Thought](#)

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Todd Myers Todd Myers

Schumacher, Ernst Friedrich

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Schumacher, Ernst Friedrich

Ernst Friedrich “Fritz” Schumacher (1911–77) is an interesting figure in political thought because of his unique blend of modern progressive concerns with a traditional conception of human nature. He is best known for his pioneering work in development economics, focusing on intermediate technologies and human-scale economies, and his concerns about overdependence on nonrenewable resources and pollution that he presented before the public in his magnum opus, *Small Is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered* (1973). His thoughts about economics and the environment were grounded in a traditionalist epistemology and conception of human nature that he articulated in *A Guide for the Perplexed* (1978). Schumacher’s vision of the economic problem as a problem of morality rather than of scarcity places him outside of the mainstream of the economics profession of his time as well as outside of the present approaches to political economy.

Schumacher was born in Bonn to a privileged German family. His grandfather had been involved in the German diplomatic service, holding posts in Latin and North America, and his father Herman served as a tutor to the children of Kaiser Wilhelm and later held an academic appointment to the economics faculty in Berlin where he worked on solving Germany’s interwar inflation crisis. Schumacher would follow his father’s interest in economics and benefited from several international educational opportunities including a Rhodes scholarship at Oxford and an opportunity to study banking at Columbia University in New York.

Schumacher's education would expose him to many of the leading economic minds and influential political actors of his time, including Joseph Schumpeter, H. Parker Willis, and perhaps most importantly, John Maynard Keynes. Temperamental, family, and political considerations pushed him toward a business career when he returned to Germany. Later, his distaste for the Hitler regime led him to a self-imposed exile in England.

With the outbreak of World War II, Schumacher was interned as an enemy alien. During his time of internment, he studied Karl Marx and Marxism but ultimately rejected ideologies of both the left and the right because he believed they neglected the spiritual dimensions of human existence. His social and political connections and intellectual work earned him a position with the Oxford Institute of Statistics. Theoretical work on a concept for an international clearing office brought him closer to John Maynard Keynes, while his reading of William Beveridge's *Full Employment in a Free Society* infused his economic thinking with a moral conscience.

After the war, Schumacher participated as an economic adviser to the British Control Commission. Coming from a democratic socialist perspective and as a supporter of the British Labour Party, he unsuccessfully lobbied Conrad Adenauer to socialize coal, steel, and iron. Later, when Britain nationalized coal in 1950, Schumacher would be appointed as chief economic adviser to the British National Coal Board, a job he would hold until 1970.

Schumacher's time at the National Coal Board would be intellectually fruitful. He became familiar with the works of G. I. Gurdjieff (1877–1949) and P. D. Ouspensky (1878–1947) and the search for spiritual evolution as well as the work of the British psychiatrist Maurice Nicoll (1884–1953), who attempted to reconcile the teachings of these thinkers' path for human development with Christianity. At this time, Schumacher deepened his knowledge of Buddhism through his acquaintance with Edward Conze (1904–79), an Anglo-German Buddhist and scholar. This spiritual education contributed to his embrace of a decentralized approach to economics when he visited Burma as economic adviser to the Burmese government in 1954. His paper emerging from this experience, "Economics in a Buddhist Country" (1955), echoing the economic position held by Mahatma Gandhi,

argued for an economy that was built on renewable resources and was sufficient to meet human needs while avoiding materialism. The common core that animated Gandhi's and a Buddhist approach to economic problems is that labor and the appropriate approach to it is an essential aspect of human spiritual evolution, and not merely effort that is to be avoided as a bad, as it was treated in Western economic theory. This spiritual approach to economics inspired Schumacher's conception of intermediate technology, a technology that was affordable, sustainable, and within the control of humans, as a tactical approach to economic development. In 1966, Schumacher founded the Intermediate Technology Development Group, a nongovernmental organization, to promote this humane and practical approach to technology.

After making a strong argument for an economy centered on Buddhist or other traditional values, Schumacher intensified his own study of the Western Christian heritage with particular attention on Thomism and neo-Thomist thinkers such as Etienne Gilson (1884–1978) and Jacques Maritain (1882–1973). Many would see a strong Catholic influence, particularly from Distributists like Hillaire Belloc (1870–1954) and G. K. Chesterton (1874–1936), on Schumacher's thought, although he did not formally join the Catholic Church until 1971.

Involvement with gardening and the Soil Association as well as serving on the board of Scott Bader and Company, a polymer manufacturer that emphasized collective ownership and limits on compensation to protect the lowest paid co-owners' rights, and continued work in development advising in Africa and Asia would add further practical experience informing Schumacher's theory. By 1973, Schumacher synthesized these diverse influences with the philosophical insights of economist and anarchist Leopold Kohr (1909–94) and radical social critic and philosopher Ivan Illich (1926–2002) into *Small Is Beautiful*.

Small Is Beautiful's core themes challenged the assumptions of mainstream economics and its neglect of the integrity of the natural environment and human personhood. The book questioned the wisdom of free trade, economic development, economies of scale, the imprudent use of technology, value-neutrality about human goals, growth for growth's sake,

and called for human scale endeavors that served higher purposes. The success of this book made Schumacher an international celebrity and opened doors for him to advocate for his ideas in the highest places including meetings with U.S. President Jimmy Carter and California Governor Jerry Brown. In 1995, *The Times Literary Supplement* named *Small Is Beautiful* as one of the 100 most influential books since World War II.

In 1977, he would publish *A Guide for the Perplexed* that would lay the ontological foundation for his political program. Schumacher affirmed an Aristotelian hierarchy of being, embraced a traditionalist approach to the great religious traditions as a source of this wisdom, and expressed concerns about modern science's ability to meaningfully engage the complex political problems confronting human beings. A better understanding of the interaction of Schumacher's practical actions and advocacy and its relationship to his ontology will be important to assess Schumacher's standing as a political thinker and the long-term salience of his thought.

Todd Myers

See also [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Environmentalism](#), [Ecology, and Political Thought](#); [Keynes, John Maynard](#); [Liberalism](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Progress](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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John Medearis John Medearis

Schumpeter, Joseph

Schumpeter, Joseph

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Schumpeter, Joseph

Joseph Schumpeter is best known for two politically significant intellectual contributions: an elite competitive theory of democracy and a dynamic, heroic vision of capitalism. Born in Austria-Hungary in 1883, Schumpeter descended, on his father's side, from a family of provincial textile manufacturers. But after his father's death, Schumpeter's mother, through remarriage and relocation, positioned Schumpeter to enjoy a life in the aristocratic heart of the empire. He attended an elite secondary school and the University of Vienna, where he studied economics. He obtained academic appointments in Czernowitz and then Graz. During World War I, he wrote a series of memos advising a conservative audience on strategies to preserve the empire and its hybrid of aristocracy and capitalism. After the empire's collapse, he served an unproductive term as finance secretary in an Austrian coalition government. After a few years in banking, Schumpeter returned to academia, first in Bonn, and then at Harvard, where he crowned his intellectual career. In the United States, he continued to feel himself on the wrong side of historical developments, notably the New Deal, which represented to him many of the distressing tendencies that threatened capitalism. He died in 1950.

Schumpeter's best-known contribution to political science and political theory is his competitive elite theory of democracy. His motive in developing a theory of democracy derived from his well-known view that capitalist society was declining, to be replaced by democratic socialism. To understand what democratic-socialist society would look like—to

understand whether it would entail the democratic restructuring of new social realms, especially industry—Schumpeter felt the need to clarify the nature of democracy per se. His conclusions are crystallized in a definition: democracy as just an institutional arrangement in which teams of political elites compete with each other for mass electoral support and thus for power.

Schumpeter clears space for this definition of democracy by dismantling concepts of rule by the people, common good, or popular will—indeed, any theory treating democracy as an end in itself—as found in the work of figures such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John Stuart Mill. “The people,” he argued, is a concept too expandable to provide any real guidance. The hopelessness of many people agreeing on an idea of what is good bars us from calling any such idea “common.” And in the absence of any common good, it is pointless to imagine many diverse individuals converging on a shared will. In any case, Schumpeter argued, most ordinary individuals lack anything that could usefully be termed will. They are ill-informed about politics, unclear about how to achieve their wants, disturbingly persuadable, and subject to irrational impulses. Because majorities could agree on policies that no conscientious democrat could support, democracy had to be regarded only as a means, not as something valuable in itself.

The most important implication of this line of reasoning was that democracy rests not on the participation and deliberation of the masses but on the leadership of political elites. The only role for the people is to vote on which elite group will rule them until the next election. This conception of democracy, simultaneously denigrating the ability of most people to affect rational political change and granting a crucial role to society’s natural leaders, also ultimately portrayed democracy as static. It was a political method that could be contained within the stable, existing framework of society. A version of this view may be found in Schumpeter’s writings even decades before its best-known expression in *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*. But this elite conception actually existed in dialectical relation with another vision of democracy, often neglected, as more participatory and socially transformative. Arguably, then, Schumpeter’s elite competitive view represented his political program as

much as his scholarly outlook, his aspiration as much as the conclusion of any detached analysis.

For some, especially certain conservatives, the most significant of Schumpeter's contributions is not elite democracy but "creative destruction." In Schumpeter's view, the standard theory of the perfectly competitive market failed to capture capitalism's inherent dynamism. Unusually talented and energetic entrepreneurs, he said, introduced innovations that recurrently disturbed economic equilibrium, revolutionized production, and laid waste to firms devoted to old economic ways. Such "creative destruction" was crucial both to Schumpeter's attack on those who valorized equilibrium models and to an explanation of why capitalism's ups and downs were not in themselves threatening to the system.

Schumpeter's theory of democracy as elite competition has been for decades both a building block for many studies and a target for productive critical reflection. Meanwhile, creative destruction, while difficult to incorporate within mathematical economics, has deeply influenced studies of business, as well as political debates about capitalism. In both of these ways, Schumpeter's reputation seems likely to persist.

John Medearis

See also [Democratic Theory](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Liberalism](#); [Michels, Robert](#); [Mill, John Stuart](#); [Pareto, Vilfredo](#); [Rousseau, Jean-Jacques](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [Weber, Max](#)

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Mikko Tolonen Mikko Tolonen

Scottish Enlightenment

Scottish enlightenment

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Scottish Enlightenment

Eighteenth-century Scotland enjoyed a rare share of intellectual vivacity. The term “Scottish Enlightenment” is often used to denote a philosophical period (from approximately the 1720s to the 1820s) forming a part of the intellectual foundation of Western modernity. Although the literary flourish of eighteenth-century Scotland is universally admired, the concept of the Scottish Enlightenment and whether there were one or many Enlightenments remain contested issues. The term “Scottish Enlightenment” was not used by eighteenth-century contemporaries, but it was first coined at the turn of the twentieth century. The existence, content, and relevance of the Scottish Enlightenment have been sources of growing debate since the 1960s. This entry will outline the Scottish Enlightenment by considering its nature and thinkers, by framing its historical and intellectual context, by drafting its main moral and political features, and finally by taking into account its legacy as a platform for Western modernity.

Around the 1750s, the small Scottish population (only about 1.3 million inhabitants) was avant-garde in many discussions that have since shaped the modern intellectual atmosphere with regard to natural science, theology, philosophy, and especially conceptions of civil society. Eighteenth-century Scotland witnessed the emergence of the well-known intellectual giants Francis Hutcheson, David Hume, and Adam Smith. This period is perhaps most famous for elaborate projects aiming to outline the “Science of Man” and ranging from epistemological questions of human understanding to

conclusions about aesthetics, morals, and politics (e.g., Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, 1739–40). In political philosophy, the Scots of the Enlightenment period were the first to underscore concretely the relevance of commerce to our historical understanding of the emergence of civil society.

The Scottish Enlightenment can also be used as a term denoting an intellectual movement that was Whig and liberal-minded in politics and moderate Presbyterian in religion. Although there are many crucial differences in moral and political thought of the eighteenth-century Scots, the Scottish Enlightenment was a unified project because it had a common aim: the progress of humanity. It was a movement founded at the University and the Church in all the major university towns of eighteenth-century Scotland: Edinburgh, Glasgow, St Andrews, and Aberdeen. It formed a moderate culture of clergymen, professors, and laymen striving for cosmopolitan universality. It was a culture that also took root in different clubs and societies, founded for the purpose of promoting the progress of humanity. The Scottish Enlightenment also had an idiosyncratically practical side to it, exemplified in different reform attempts in the Highlands that at the time were considered uncivilized.

The authors of the Scottish Enlightenment worked closely with a network of patrons and book publishers in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and London, which was crucial in making an actual intellectual impact. A list of the characters of the Scottish Enlightenment includes Francis Hutcheson, David Hume, Adam Smith, Adam Ferguson, William Robertson, Henry Home, John Millar, Thomas Reid, Hugh Blair, Alexander Gerard, George Campbell, Joseph Black, William Cullen, Allan Ramsay, Lord Monboddo, Alexander Carlyle, John Gregory, Sir David Dalrymple, James Hutton, Robert Adam, James Beattie, Henry Mackenzie, Dugald Stewart, and others.

Context

The main historical context for the Scottish Enlightenment was the Act of Union of 1707, which formed Great Britain and marked the dissolution of the Scottish parliament. Scotland in the early eighteenth century was a relatively poor and backward country, although it had had its share of

intellectual cultivation in prior centuries. Any claims that the intellectual vivacity of the Scottish Enlightenment emerged solely because of the Union are unfounded. England, Scotland, and Wales had not only common denominators facilitating the Union (geography, language, and Protestant religion) but also differences (e.g., the English legal system was based on the common law tradition, whereas the Scots had followed the central European tradition of founding their legal system on Roman law). The eighteenth-century political framework was dominated by considerations of the European state system, and French absolutist attempts at universal monarchy largely shaped the intellectual atmosphere in Britain. A foundational question for the Scottish Enlightenment was the question of a commercial empire and Scotland's interest in securing its overseas trade by being a part of Great Britain. Eighteenth-century Scotland also witnessed rebellions in the form of Jacobite risings in 1715 and 1745 that threatened the Union.

The Scottish Enlightenment can be seen as a catalyst for many of the most relevant seventeenth-century intellectual developments, especially in the tradition of natural law. The eighteenth-century Scots also read their share of French moralist views alongside Thomas Hobbes's conception of the state of nature, John Locke's taxonomy of mind, and other seventeenth-century intellectual achievements. In accordance with Locke's empirical principles, perhaps the two most relevant authors shaping the ideas of the Scottish Enlightenment were Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury, and the Dutch-born controversialist Bernard Mandeville. Shaftesbury's ideas of sociability had a profound impact on the moderate culture of eighteenth-century Scotland with regard to humankind's capacity for benevolence, whereas Mandeville's more realistic outlook emphasized egoistic tendencies in human actions. The dichotomy between these thinkers also sparked debates dividing the Scottish Enlightenment into different camps.

Perhaps the greatest impact of the Scottish Enlightenment on Western thought has been the idea that morality is founded on sentiment rather than on reason, an idea developed mainly by Hutcheson and accepted by Hume, Smith, and others. This development can be seen as part of the empirical tradition in which the history of science also plays a crucial role and in

which the significance of Francis Bacon, Robert Boyle, and Locke is evident.

Moral and Political Thought

One characteristic feature of eighteenth-century thought is that moral and political spheres overlap. Similarly, eighteenth-century economic ideas must be considered part of political economy because economic theory as such did not yet exist. In the Scottish Enlightenment, everything that was part of moral theory was also considered part of political thought and vice versa. This stemmed from the empirical background of the Scottish Enlightenment, which began by first defining human understanding and human nature, and from this perspective aimed toward the common good, policy making, and the generation of wealth by managing the nation's resources.

The main moral dispute of the Scottish Enlightenment concerned passions. Whereas previous Christian traditions taught that morality required passions to be controlled and suppressed, eighteenth-century Europe saw a growing number of authors suggesting that even vice could sometimes be publicly beneficial and that the passions of pride and self-interest need not be repressed, only redirected so that they prove useful. This was a foundational matter of debate in the Scottish Enlightenment, which generated various fruitful contemporary accounts of the historical development of civil society. In particular, the question of luxurious consumption beyond one's basic needs divided opinions that varied from claims of public and moral corruption to sophisticated arguments of public utility. One of the main works on this topic is Adam Ferguson's *Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767).

Hand in hand with the question of the role of self-interest and pride in civil society went the question of moral motivation: Are people universally benevolent by nature? Many authors of the Scottish Enlightenment believed that human beings have a moral sense that can, like vision, be distorted but that also serves as a foundation for moral motivation. Some authors, most notably Hume, denied the claim about universal benevolence by emphasizing the role of conventions in social formation. Debates about

hedonism and the role of utility in civil society were common in eighteenth-century Scotland, as exemplified in Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759).

Perhaps the most important moral and political concept of the Scottish Enlightenment was justice. Questions of the origin of property and rightful ownership drew largely from natural law, which had a strong institutional basis in eighteenth-century Scotland. Most authors criticized seventeenth-century contract theories, and Scottish historical writing developed together with discussions of property, justice, political obligation, and the legitimacy of government. As an outcome, the social theory of the Scottish Enlightenment was rooted in historical understanding of the development of civil society. The question of justice was also a moral question, which extended the discussion of the natural and artificial sociability of humankind. Although Hume is best known today for his epistemological conclusions, his reputation in the eighteenth century relied almost solely on his *Essays*, *Political Discourses*, and voluminous *History of England*. Hume's views on justice (and causation) were attacked particularly by commonsense philosopher Thomas Reid.

Alongside justice, another critical discussion about conventions concerned politeness. Politeness was a crucial concept in the Scottish Enlightenment mainly based on Shaftesbury's ideas of virtuous sociability, which provided a framework for civility within the boundaries of virtue, in contrast to Orthodox Calvinism's strict views on sin and the continental tradition of court civility that emphasized external attributes of courtesy. Hume, following Mandeville, claimed that these views based on natural sociability were contrary to human nature and thus untenable. However, politeness for Hume was just as important a concept as it was for the followers of Shaftesbury. The difference was that Hume claimed that politeness was an external custom and an artificial virtue. The opinions of the Scottish Enlightenment were thus also split concerning politeness.

Despite their differences, eighteenth-century Scottish authors had a common aim in politics: global civilization. Interestingly, the thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment approached interstate relations in Europe from the perspective of human nature, which gave their arguments a scope of

universality. At the same time, their political views varied from the political radicalism of Hutcheson to more conservative views expressed by Hume, Smith, and Dugald Stewart after the French Revolution.

The foundational moral and political issue of the Scottish Enlightenment was commerce. Although Adam Smith had predecessors, he was the first to identify explicitly the relevance of the unintended, beneficial consequences of self-interested actions in the marketplace. Smith also emphasized that comparison in the development of a civil society shows that the poor of commercial society are better off than the rich of previous stages (assessments were made of Europe's "civilized monarchies" and Native American tribal communities). This was not an argument to be ignored, and when combined with growing attempts to break free from mercantilism by emphasizing the role of the division of labor, productivity, and how to secure the advantages of rich countries from countries underselling their products, these ideas of *homo economicus*, as outlined in Smith's *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776), began to form a platform for Western modernity.

Although commercial society was considered the most advanced state of human sociability, questions about the imperfections of the market, instead of the full-fledged promotion of laissez-faire liberalism, dominated discussions of political economy. One such question was whether Great Britain should forfeit its overseas colonies and grant independence to the United States. This does not mean, however, that Smith and others would have been supporters of uncontrolled free trade and global shareholding without interference by local governments. Smith also had a genuine interest in the condition of the poor and ordinary laborers. Nor did this entail ideas of social reform or redistribution of wealth as a state-run strategy. Smith did, however, provide a seed for the idea of universal education of the poor.

Legacy

The cosmopolitan character of eighteenth-century Scotland involved a relationship with other European countries sharing influences with French eighteenth-century thought in particular as well as an Atlantic dimension

through the work of John Witherspoon and others toward the end of the Scottish Enlightenment. The Enlightenment period cannot be described as a teleological progress of reason and steady decline of religion. Questions regarding the political organization of the church, the natural history of religion, and matters of faith were an integral part of the Scottish Enlightenment. It is therefore only natural that religious toleration was one of the main issues of the era.

As the political framework changed during the eighteenth century, and wars turned out to be too expensive for individual states to handle, so the emphasis of the Scottish Enlightenment shifted from debates about moral sense and natural sociability to discussions of the European state system and the commercial empire of the sea. Modern state structures began to emerge, taxation slowly became more regular, the banking industry was established, and questions of paper money and public debt were fervently debated. This had a crucial impact on the Scottish Enlightenment, so it is understandable that Adam Smith, for example, who was first and foremost a moral philosopher, is best known as the father of classical economics.

Political economy was an integral part of the legacy of the Scottish Enlightenment for Western modernity, but equally important were questions of constitutional balance and what kind of role a sovereign should have in a mixed form of government in which political power is shared between parliament and a monarch. Authors of the Scottish Enlightenment were amply constructing their political views on the concepts of equity and equality; at the same time, democracy was not part of their common vocabulary. In short, the Scottish Enlightenment formed a platform for Western modernity, but it was not the world we inhabit today.

Mikko Tolonen

See also [Civil Society](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [English Enlightenment](#); [Ferguson, Adam](#); [French Enlightenment](#); [German Enlightenment](#); [Human Nature, Theories of](#); [Hume, David](#); [Natural Law](#); [Property, Theories of](#); [Smith, Adam](#); [State of Nature](#)

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Jeffrey Goldsworthy Jeffrey Goldsworthy

Separation of Powers

Separation of powers

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Separation of Powers

The separation and allocation to different institutions of the main powers of government—legislative, executive, and judicial—is one of the most prominent features of modern constitutionalism. It is designed to reduce the risk of tyranny and to promote efficiency through specialization.

In medieval times, governmental powers were often concentrated in a monarch or emperor. In England, for example, the king was simultaneously the chief lawmaker, the head of the executive government, and the supreme judge, even though he often delegated his powers to inferior clerks and judges whom he appointed and could dismiss at will.

As the unwritten English constitution developed, it took on the features of “mixed government,” with sovereign power exercised jointly in parliament by the monarch, aristocracy, and representatives of the commoners. Parliament was the supreme legislature and the nation’s highest court, and eventually, it acquired power over the executive branch. According to the theory of mixed government, the main alternative models of government—monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy—each possessed distinctive virtues and vices, so that a judicious combination of all three could hope to enjoy their virtues while suppressing their vices. This theory was based on the writings of Aristotle and the practices of Republican Rome, which involved power sharing by the aristocracy and representatives of the plebeians.

The theory of the separation of powers differs from that of mixed government. Even today, the unwritten British constitution does not formally incorporate a separation of powers. Under the Westminster system of responsible government, the executive branch is regarded as responsible to parliament, and it is controlled by those members of parliament who enjoy majority support in the Lower House. On the other hand, a separation of judicial power, although not constitutionally entrenched, is upheld by constitutional conventions, which are customary practices generally regarded as obligatory although not legally enforceable. These conventions are underpinned by the Bill of Rights (1688), a statute providing that judges cannot be dismissed by the monarch but only by parliament for proved misbehavior or incapacity.

Influenced both by Iroquois and other native confederacies (Grinde and Johansen 1991) and by the French political theorist Baron de Montesquieu, the framers of the U.S. Constitution maintained that the concentration of all governmental powers in a single institution, even if elected, “may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny” (James Madison, *The Federalist*, #301). They devised a written Constitution in which those powers were allocated to separate institutions: the legislative power to Congress, the executive power to the president, and the judicial power to the Supreme Court and other federal courts established by Congress. But this separation was deliberately incomplete. To enable each branch to act as a “check and balance” on the activities of the others, each was given some powers with respect to the others. Thus, legislation can be vetoed by the president; the president and Supreme Court judges can be impeached by Congress; Supreme Court judges are nominated by the president but must be confirmed by the Senate; and so on.

The separation of judicial power from the political branches of government is the most important aspect of the doctrine. This feature requires judges to enjoy independence in exercising their judgments. There would be no point in vesting judicial power in judges who could be forced or induced to act at the behest of the political branches. In most modern constitutions, therefore, judges’ tenure and remuneration are insulated from political interference.

It has proved extremely difficult in practice to delineate the traditional distinctions among the various powers of government, especially as those powers have evolved and multiplied since the end of the eighteenth century. In some legal systems, a large and complex body of laws has been developed that attempts to provide criteria for distinguishing each power from the others. Many critics argue that this task is impossible because the multifarious and often discretionary powers of the modern administrative state simply cannot be shoe-horned into the traditional three categories. Some of them propose alternative methods of classifying governmental powers or the main branches of government. For example, it has been suggested that the increasing number of unelected and independent administrative agencies, such as central banks, economic regulators, and auditors, should be recognized as constituting a fourth branch of government that acts in a politically impartial fashion on the basis of specialized knowledge and empirical inquiry. It has also been argued that an “integrity branch” of government, to investigate and prosecute corruption and abuse of power in any of the other branches, is desirable for constitutionalism to be fully secure. An integrity branch would take over some of the investigatory and prosecutorial powers currently exercised within the executive and judicial branches.

Jeffrey Goldsworthy

See also [Constitutionalism](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Liberalism](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Rule of Law](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Bart Schultz Bart Schultz

Sidgwick, Henry

Sidgwick, Henry

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Sidgwick, Henry

An outstanding English moral philosopher of the late Victorian era, Henry Sidgwick was born on May 31, 1838, in Skipton, Yorkshire, and had a brilliant academic career at Rugby school and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he excelled in both classics and mathematics. As a young man, and member of the famous discussion society known as the Cambridge Apostles, he developed religious doubts and an interest in the utilitarianism of John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham, which held that the ultimate normative standard was the greatest happiness of the greatest number. He quickly became a devoted academic liberal and educational reformer, championing a Millian form of feminism and challenging the academic status quo on many fronts, from the unfair exclusion of women, to the overemphasis on classics, to the demands for religious conformity. In 1869, he nearly ended his academic career at Cambridge when he resigned his fellowship rather than swear to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England, as was then required. Fortunately, he was able to continue his academic work as a lecturer, and after the elimination of the subscription requirements, he again became a fellow of Trinity College, and later, in 1883, the Knightbridge Professor of Moral Philosophy. In 1876, he married Eleanor Mildred Balfour, whose brother Arthur would become prime minister. Together they devoted an enormous amount of time to the cause of higher education for women, helping to found Newnham College, Cambridge, one of the first women's colleges in England. They also worked religiously in parapsychology and were mainstays of the British Society for

Psychical Research, although their many investigations of paranormal phenomena were largely disappointing. But Sidgwick made important contributions in many fields, particularly ethics, political theory, and political economy, where he came to be regarded as a co-founder, with Alfred Marshall, of the “Cambridge School” of economics. He regularly advised the British government on economic and educational matters, and he was a well-known opponent of home rule for Ireland.

Sidgwick achieved lasting fame with the publication of his masterpiece, *The Methods of Ethics* (first edition 1874), a work that is perhaps even more widely cited by philosophers today than it was at the time of Sidgwick’s death, on August 28, 1900. The *Methods* provides a lucid expression of Sidgwick’s preferred ethical and political method—namely, classical utilitarianism—but it is a complex, heavily qualified work that often departs from the positions of Sidgwick’s great utilitarian predecessors.

Thus, Sidgwick was more keenly aware of the basic conflict between utilitarianism and rational egoism—taking one’s own greatest happiness as the ultimate standard, rather than the happiness of all—and of the need for firmer epistemological foundations for utilitarianism, to defend it as rationally superior to egoism and other alternatives, something he was not sure he could provide. He developed a sophisticated, fallibilistic form of philosophical intuitionism, hoping to yield a cognitive basis for normative claims with a set of clear, consistent, coherent, and consensual fundamental intuitions. He did not claim, however, to have succeeded in his efforts and worried that only a theological postulate could effectively overcome “the dualism of the practical reason,” reconciling pursuit of one’s own happiness with the happiness of the whole—a theological postulate that he could not compellingly defend, even by resort to parapsychology.

The *Methods* was only the first of several major treatises that Sidgwick published during his lifetime, the others being *The Principles of Political Economy* (first edition 1883), and *The Elements of Politics* (first edition 1891). Important posthumously published works include *The Development of European Polity* (1903). These books contain Sidgwick’s more extensive treatments of the political implications of utilitarianism, the nature of justice

(both national and global), international law, economic development, political evolution, jurisprudence, and more.

In these works, however, Sidgwick admittedly simply assumes utilitarianism, deeming his favored view more in line with the general tendency of educated thought. He elaborates a subtle, complex, cautiously progressive vision of the growth of more liberal democratic forms of political organization and more cosmopolitan forms of citizenship, with cooperation and confederation among the “advanced” nations reducing the risk of war. And although he takes his point of departure from a principle of nonpaternalistic individualism, as a baseline secondary principle for domestic economic and political organization, he so heavily and complexly qualifies any such approach that commentators have varied wildly in their assessment of just where he falls on a Right–Left spectrum. If he appears to have opened the door for the New Liberals’ defense of the welfare state, he was also anxious, in culturally conservative ways, about democratic and labor strife and far too uncritical of the expansion of the British empire. Indeed, his work betrays more overt racism and orientalism than does that of Bentham and Mill, even if some think him a superior economist and philosopher.

Bart Schultz

See also [Bentham, Jeremy](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Liberalism](#); [Mill, John Stuart](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Utilitarianism](#)

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Gordon Bannerman Gordon Bannerman

Sieyès, Emmanuel Joseph

Sieyès, Emmanuel Joseph

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Sieyès, Emmanuel Joseph

More commonly known as the Abbé Sieyès (1748–1836), Sieyès was a French clergyman and political writer and, in the latter capacity, one of the chief political theorists of the French Revolution. He later played a prominent role in the French Consulate and first French Empire, but it was his 1789 pamphlet *What Is the Third Estate?* for which he is most famous. The pamphlet contained the revolutionary idea that the common people, the Third Estate, were the politically sovereign nation. This idea became the ideological impulse behind the radical democratic course of the revolution, and it continued to influence the contours of democratic politics in subsequent centuries.

After a seminary education, Sieyès entered the priesthood and was appointed to the position of canon of the Cathedral of Chartres. Frustrated at his lack of advancement, Sieyès witnessed at firsthand the power and privilege of the nobility in the institutions of church and state, and it was from this vantage point that he developed a critique of aristocratic political power. Sieyès was renowned for his intellectual ability, and he embraced new philosophical and scientific principles and ideas, derived from a rigorous reading of Enlightenment thinkers such as John Locke and François Quesnay. Sieyès's rationalism and worldliness were at odds with the piety expected of the clergy, and in due course, he demonstrated the extent to which he rejected traditional institutions and structures.

Sieyès's career was transformed by the financial crisis of the French state. The inability of King Louis XVI to impose new forms of taxation on the nobility led in September 1788 to the king calling the ancient Estates-General to meet in May 1789. New taxes had to be approved by the Estates-General, but with the country in turmoil, the calling of that ancient body of representatives of the three estates of clergy, nobility, and commons threatened to unleash an avalanche of grievances. In the months before the Estates-General met, the Paris Parliament directed that the two estates of nobility and clergy would meet separately, each with the same number of delegates, and each with a single vote. In this way, the clergy and nobility would always be able to outvote the Third Estate and, thus, stifle any reform.

This was the political context in which Sieyès published *What Is the Third Estate?* In the pamphlet, Sieyès attacked the old regime and argued that the privileged nobility and clergy preyed financially on an overburdened and prostrate bourgeoisie. Sieyès viewed the Third Estate as the primary medium of public service engaged in productive work that generated and produced services and goods for the whole of society. In practical terms, Sieyès argued that the Third Estate, the common people of France, constituted the nation, a viewpoint with immensely important implications for the future of democratic, reformist politics. For Sieyès, the Third Estate should entirely replace the other two estates and assume the government of the country.

On May 5, 1789, the Estates-General met for the first time since 1614. Despite doubling the representation of the Third Estate, voting by estates meant that the Third Estate could still be outvoted. On June 17, Third Estate deputies, supported by a number of deputies from the First and Second estates, rejected this proposal and declared they were not simply the Third Estate of the Estates-General but a sovereign body in their own right. They proceeded to meet on their own in a body that eventually evolved into a national assembly. Influenced by the theoretical model and practical political strategy provided by Sieyès, Third Estate deputies, by their actions, identified the common people as the sovereign political authority.

Sieyès was elected to the Estates-General, where ironically his clerical status made him part of the First Estate, but his position did not shake his conviction that political privilege and patronage should be swept away. Sieyès continued to be influential in the early years of the revolution, expounding on theories of national and popular sovereignty, and representation, and justifying a suffrage limited to male property-owners, who were termed “active” citizens. He drafted the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, which was adopted by the Constituent Assembly on August 26, 1789 and was embodied in the French Constitution of 1791 as a preamble. As a member of the Convention, he voted for the execution of Louis XVI.

With the descent of the French Revolution later in the decade into Napoleonic dictatorship and Empire, it is clear that ultimately Sieyès failed to establish the radical and democratic bourgeois revolution he hoped for. Nevertheless, his influence on events was immense, for *What Is the Third Estate?* not only provided a critique of the old regime but also contained a powerful theoretical model providing ideas that shaped the course of the French Revolution. It encapsulated popular fury at aristocratic and clerical privilege, and it established a radical theory of popular sovereignty allied to revolutionary political strategy.

Gordon Bannerman

See also [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [French Political Thought](#); [French Revolution](#), [Political Thought of the](#); [Liberalism](#); [Locke, John](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Political Thought of the](#); [Physiocracy](#); [Radicalism](#); [Revolution](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Sovereignty](#), [State](#)

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Dennis C. Rasmussen Dennis C. Rasmussen

Smith, Adam

Smith, Adam

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Smith, Adam

Adam Smith (1723–90) was a leading figure of the intellectual movement of eighteenth-century Scotland known as the Scottish Enlightenment. He is famous today as the author of *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) and the “father” of modern capitalism, but he was perhaps best known in his lifetime as a moral philosopher.

Born in the small port town of Kirkcaldy, Scotland, Smith studied at the University of Glasgow under the eminent philosopher Francis Hutcheson. After graduating, he spent six years at Balliol College, Oxford, where he found his teachers rather uninspiring and spent much of his time in self-instruction. He obtained a position teaching logic at the University of Glasgow in 1751, and a year later was appointed chair of moral philosophy there, taking over Hutcheson’s old position. Smith’s first book, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), was enthusiastically received throughout Europe. In 1763, as a result of his newfound prominence, he was offered a generous salary and lifelong pension to leave Glasgow and become the tutor of the young Duke of Buccleuch. The pair spent two and a half years traveling on the continent, where Smith met a number of prominent *philosophes* and *économistes* in Paris and Geneva. Upon their return to Britain in 1766, Smith, a lifelong bachelor, went to Kirkcaldy to stay with his elderly mother. He had been working intermittently on the material that was to become *The Wealth of Nations* at least since the early 1760s, and he began to delve into it in earnest there. He moved to London in 1773 and added to his already considerable reputation when *The Wealth of Nations*

was finally published and became a resounding success. Soon afterward, he was appointed commissioner of customs for Scotland, a job that he held during the last decade of his life, in Edinburgh.

Like his close friend, the philosopher David Hume, Smith argued that moral judgments are derived not from reason but from sentiment, above all from feelings of approval and disapproval. According to his moral theory, an action or character trait can be considered virtuous if an “impartial spectator”—that is, a bystander who is disinterested and fully informed—would approve of that action or trait. Such a spectator’s sentiments would naturally be influenced by the norms of his or her society, thus, making the content of morality “relative” to some degree. In Smith’s view, a society’s moral norms arise spontaneously over time through the actions and judgments of individuals who do not consciously set out to produce those norms, similar to the way a flourishing economy arises spontaneously over time through the actions of individuals who do not consciously set out to promote the society’s welfare. Smith was, as his current reputation would suggest, a firm defender of commercial society and free trade, but his defense was a nuanced and historically informed one. He frequently highlighted the potential dangers of uncontrolled commerce, such as the tendency of individuals to undergo nearly endless toil and anxiety in the pursuit of frivolous luxuries, the proclivity of merchants to procure monopolies that harm ordinary consumers, and the way an excessive division of labor can weaken the intellect and the courage of workers. For these reasons, Smith emphasized the need for a strong central government to enforce rules of fair play and to promote education, especially among the poor. Hence, although he opposed most governmental attempts to direct individuals in the use of their labor or capital, he was no opponent of government in general. Indeed, he devoted a considerable portion of Book V of *The Wealth of Nations* to arguing that the government and its functions must *expand* as society progresses. Although he certainly welcomed the prosperity that commerce made possible, Smith indicated in Book III of *The Wealth of Nations* that the *greatest* advantage of commercial society is that it helped to eliminate the kinds of insecurity and personal dependence that dominated most precommercial societies. In other words, Smith’s deepest reason for defending commercial society was not that it provides people with more material goods but that it provides them with more freedom.

Dennis C. Rasmussen

See also [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Hume, David](#); [Liberalism](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Neoliberalism](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Scottish Enlightenment](#); [State, Theories of the](#)

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Lewis Hinchman Lewis Hinchman

Social Democracy

Social democracy

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Social Democracy

Today the term *social democracy* is commonly associated with support for the welfare state, a mixed economy, cooperation among social classes, and reform rather than revolution. But social democracy is a work in progress, defined more by the policies its leaders and spokespersons have adopted in countries where they have governed than by systematic philosophical reflections. It thus remains a practice in search of an appropriate theory.

Intellectual History of Social Democracy

Social democracy has a twofold philosophical origin: the classical theory of liberal democracy and socialist thought since about 1850. Initially in conflict, these two sources eventually have proven to be compatible—even mutually reinforcing. The starting point of liberalism has always been the assertion that human beings possess rights as such, and not because they belong to any specific class, religion, or ethnic group. Underlying that notion of universal rights is the intuition that human beings should be free to choose their life plans and the governments under which they will live. By the late nineteenth century, autonomy and self-development had become the watchwords of liberal political thought. Yet for centuries the conception of freedom latent in liberalism had only limited practical consequences for nonelites. Liberal theorists thought that formal guarantees of rights plus representative government would be enough to ensure liberty and self-development for all. It did not seem to them necessary to go further, for

example, by instituting universal suffrage or tolerating radical dissent, much less adopting social welfare measures.

Socialism's most influential thinker, Karl Marx, rejected the liberal notion of rights as an artifact of bourgeois society to be jettisoned once class antagonisms had been eliminated. His critique developed two related insights. First, Marx insisted that the legal recognition of formal equality would not necessarily affect the character of a person's concrete existence. For that to occur, the material circumstances of life would have to change—the character of work, patterns of ownership, and so on. Second, abolishing the capitalist system of production would finally enable human beings to make their own history with “will and consciousness” by acts of collective choice, whereas previously they had submitted to blind necessity—either the forces of nature or the intensifying cycles of boom and bust typical of capitalist economies. Marx believed that human liberation and genuine self-determination could be achieved only after the working classes had seized the means of production. In the century after Marx's death, social democrats would gradually abandon the commitment to socialism (public ownership of industry) but not the goals of freedom and self-development or collective decision making about the organization of society.

Elements of the Modern Social-Democratic Synthesis

The first political parties to call themselves socialist or social democratic frequently refused to cooperate with other parties or participate in parliamentary governments on the grounds that social democrats should await the inevitable self-destruction of capitalism. They offered few concrete proposals for socioeconomic reform except the program of nationalizing industry. But by the early twentieth century, dissidents had begun to rethink the old Marxist orthodoxy.

For example, Eduard Bernstein in Germany came to regard social democracy as a more advanced version of classical liberalism, not as the latter's antithesis. Moreover, he realized that capitalism had developed and adapted since Marx's era, generating greater wealth and a more complex

class system than the crude two-class model that orthodox Marxism had taken for granted. Accordingly, he advocated cooperation with some “bourgeois” political parties, a more evolutionary path to socialism, and a commitment to active reform designed to bring concrete benefits to workers. He consistently opposed a policy of passivity and disengagement justified by some socialists (e.g., Karl Kautsky) on the grounds that capitalism would collapse of its own weight. But he also clashed with Rosa Luxemburg and other militants who believed that capitalism could be toppled only by revolution. Eventually, the social-democratic movement split in most countries. The revolutionary wing allied itself with the Bolshevik movement in Russia and took the name “communist,” while the more gradualist and reform-oriented factions or parties retained the name “social democratic.”

Unlike Bernstein, an important politician in the German Social Democratic Party, Hermann Heller developed a proto-theory of social democracy from a liberal rather than a socialist viewpoint. Heller, a legal scholar, sought to extend the idea of the rule of law beyond its usual procedural meaning to cover social and economic conditions as well. Alarmed by the class tensions that beset German politics in the 1920s, he thought a “material rule of law” was needed that would ensure the fair distribution of resources and opportunities by consulting and including all relevant stakeholders in political deliberations. In fact, he urged that reshaping social and economic conditions according to the principles of justice would ultimately lead to a higher degree of social homogeneity, by which he meant a political culture in which mutual trust and respect would eventually supplant class conflict and violence. In short, society would be dominated by a “we” feeling rather than by an “us versus them” mentality. To put his idea in more modern terms, he realized that social democracy could contribute to social stability and the accumulation of “social capital.”

Another prominent figure in the evolution of social democracy, T. H. Marshall, argued that the three key elements of basic human rights, civic, political, and social, had gotten out of phase by the early nineteenth century. Liberal regimes in England and elsewhere sought to institute legal and eventually even political equality as a matter of civic right. To do so, they had to dismantle many of the social protections (for example, fair

compensation for work) that ordinary Englishmen had previously enjoyed. The liberal establishment failed to realize that many citizens could not make full use of these newly conferred rights as long as they were denied such elementary socioeconomic benefits as a decent wage, education, and some leisure time. Only after World War II, Marshall claimed, did the notion of “social citizenship” come to mesh with liberalism’s other commitments. The full enjoyment of civic and political rights could be guaranteed only if citizens also possessed the social rights to a decent standard of living. In the postwar social-democratic welfare state, that conjunction of civic and political with social rights finally came to fruition, most notably, in the Scandinavian countries.

Furthermore, most social-democratic parties eventually fell under the influence of British economist John Maynard Keynes, who early in the Great Depression concluded that public ownership of the means of production—old-fashioned socialism—was not necessary to cure the ills of capitalism. It would be enough to pursue more enlightened economic policies (especially deficit spending) to smooth out capitalism’s characteristic boom-and-bust cycle and inaugurate an era of lasting prosperity. Keynes’s message dovetailed well with the arguments made decades earlier by social-democratic reformers like Bernstein, Jean Jaurès in France, and Hjalmar Branting in Sweden: Social democracy needed to offer workers practical reforms with concrete, palpable benefits.

Social Democracy Today

In the postwar era, the reform strand within socialist and social-democratic parties gradually won out. Experience during the 1920s and 1930s had shown that social-democratic parties needed to take a stand in favor of liberal rights and the rule of law. Where they did not, authoritarian and totalitarian movements triumphed and liquidated the social-democratic parties along with their leaders. Moreover, Keynesian theory plus the lessons of actual governance suggested that social-democratic parties could attain many of their objectives without opting for socialist-style nationalization of the means of production. In one country after another, socialist and social-democratic parties adopted programs of social welfare, steeply graduated taxation, and limited nationalization of industry. But

theory had not yet caught up with practice. Social democrats needed to reflect on their own changing ideologies, policies, and aims. The need for a systematic review of policy and its justifications became even more evident by the 1980s, for several reasons. First, the trend toward globalization undercut the nation-state's ability to ensure social welfare and greater equality. Second, new movements for gender equality, environmental sustainability, and cultural diversity were not easily accommodated within older social-democratic intellectual assumptions of social homogeneity, the primacy of heavy industry, and the one-earner family. Finally, the resurgence of free market or "neoliberal" ideas and policies in some countries, (e.g., what became known as Reaganomics in the United States and Thatcherism in Britain) challenged social-democratic theorists to redefine their core principles.

One strand of theorizing about the movement's goals and prospects in the late twentieth century focused on the conditions for its success in countries in which social-democratic parties actually have held or shared power for significant stretches. Scandinavian countries fit this description best, especially Sweden, where the Swedish Social Democratic Workers' Party (SAP) governed during most of the post-World War II era. Empirically oriented studies explain the movement's successes in light of the unusual historical conditions that prevailed in Scandinavia, such as the fragmentation of the political right wing and the early willingness of the SAP to join in coalitions with "bourgeois" parties, in contrast to social democrats' aloofness in Germany, France, and elsewhere. By now, the Scandinavian experience, with its generous and universalistic patterns of social provision, has tended to convince most casual observers that social democracy is in fact equivalent to the welfare state. But even there, social-democratic theorists have had to adapt. They have incorporated a great deal of the ecological agenda into their program, have opted for broad participation of ordinary citizens in political decision making, and have undertaken vigorous efforts to overcome class bias in the school system. To some extent, the Scandinavian pattern simply *is* what social democracy means. But some theorists have attempted a more systematic approach, reasoning that social democracy needs a grounding that can synthesize empirical and philosophical points of view.

The modern normative theory of social democracy begins from the premise that it is above all a variety of *democracy*. Hence, whatever the requirements for full and complete democracy may be (and these will certainly include the basic rights recognized by liberalism), social democracy must incorporate them into its program. But contemporary social democracy also retains the insight articulated long before by Marx and taken up by Heller, Marshall, and others: Political democracy and civic equality are not enough; democracy must be made “social” in the sense that it reshapes and equalizes human relationships in the world of work, education, and income distribution.

One effort to rethink the meaning of social democracy for our time has been undertaken by British sociologist Anthony Giddens. Concerned by the popularity of neoliberal policies in England, Giddens has concluded that social democracy must find a “third way” between traditional socialism, with its emphasis on state control of important sectors of the economy, and untrammelled capitalism in the mold of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. He believes that social democrats should acknowledge the central role of the market in generating income and employment and in providing economic incentives, an increasing concern in European welfare-state economies of the twenty-first century. Furthermore, he advocates an “active civil society” in which some of the tasks that the state might once have assumed in social-democratic theory would be delegated to civic associations in the way recommended long ago by Alexis de Tocqueville. The point would be to arrest the decline of citizenship that seems to be affecting most modern societies and disassociate social democracy from centralization and statism.

Another approach, taken by Sheri Berman, locates the distinctiveness of social democracy in two key principles uncovered in the course of its development: the primacy of politics and communitarianism. Social-democratic thinkers and political leaders gradually freed their movement from residual orthodox Marxist elements (e.g., the supposed inevitability of communism and the premise of insuperable class conflict). What remained was the conviction that social democrats could cooperate with representatives of other classes in parliamentary coalitions to advance a reformist “welfare-state” agenda. But social democracy is not just

Keynesian economics plus social security; it involves a more communitarian idea of citizenship. To have a dignified life, a person should enjoy a certain degree of immunity from blind market forces and personal misfortune. The goal of social democracy is then to offer a clear alternative to liberalism and to exempt important realms of life from the market and its tendency to convert everything into a commodity. Berman accordingly criticizes Giddens and other “third-way” theorists for going too far to accommodate liberalism within social democracy.

The most elaborate and sophisticated attempt to explain and justify social democracy has been proposed by German scholar Thomas Meyer. Like Berman and Giddens, Meyer regards social-democratic theory as a subset of democratic theory; unlike Berman, he considers it a branch of liberal democracy. He grounds social-democratic principles on the catalogue of basic rights endorsed by the United Nations in its two 1966 covenants that were subsequently ratified by most countries. These principles include not only the older “liberal” rights but social, economic, and cultural ones as well. The advantage of this move is that it need not invoke controversial philosophical principles. We have all bound ourselves to observe the covenants; Meyer simply underscores the fact that they—especially the social, economic, and cultural rights—imply a commitment to social democracy. Drawing on T. H. Marshall, Meyer insists that the traditional liberal preference for negative liberty must be broadened to include the positive liberties that “social citizenship” alone can confer; otherwise liberalism itself becomes incoherent. As Meyer puts it, rights must have real-world efficacy, not just formal validity. That is, people need meaningful opportunities to exercise the liberties guaranteed them in old-fashioned liberalism. Furthermore, social-democratic policies have become indispensable for maintaining the *legitimacy* and stability of modern societies. Contemporary citizens expect governments to protect them from a variety of risks, from unemployment, ill health, and pollution to global warming. When nation-states fail to deliver the goods, they lose legitimacy in a normative sense (they are “defective democracies”) but also empirically, in that dissatisfied citizens tend to withdraw their cooperation. Finally, Meyer accepts the argument advanced by Giddens and Berman in different ways: Modern social democracy must be about expanding democracy itself. Civil society must be given its share of responsibility,

opportunities for participation in decision making must be broadened, and even the private economy must be democratized as much as possible (as in the rights of co-determination for German workers).

Conclusion

Social democracy still implies commitment to social-welfare policies, public goods, and interclass cooperation within a mixed economy guided by Keynesian principles. But after nearly a century of practical experience, its advocates have begun to reflect more searchingly on its foundations, aims, and possibilities and have incorporated a variety of new concerns into it. Today, social democracy is more about democracy and far less about socialism than it once was. Looming on the horizon, however, are the increasingly serious economic challenges facing social-democratic economies and governments, replete with fiscal pressures to cut back on economic entitlements and popular resistance to these cutbacks.

Lewis Hinchman

See also [Bernstein, Eduard](#); [Civil Society](#); [Communism](#); [Varieties of Communitarianism](#); [Kautsky, Karl](#); [Keynes, John Maynard](#); [Liberalism](#); [Luxemburg, Rosa](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Neoconservatism](#); [Neoliberalism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Property, Theories of](#); [Republicanism](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Socialism](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Tocqueville, Alexis de](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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In the mid-twentieth century, Joseph Schumpeter (1883–1950) reluctantly predicted the fall of capitalism and the triumph of socialism. More recently, political scientist Francis Fukuyama announced the demise of socialism and the triumph of liberal capitalism. Observing the growing influence of the People's Republic of China in the world, together with the shock to world capitalism of the banking and financial crisis of 2007, Fukuyama's judgment seems no sounder than Schumpeter's. The subsequent dislocations in the social and political fabric of several southern European states surely allow for the possible resurgence of socialism. Moreover, the documentary filmmaker Michael Moore, in *Bowling for Columbine* (2002) and *Sicko* (2007); the philosopher Michael Sandel in *What Money Can't Buy* (2012); and the economist Joseph Stiglitz in *The Price of Inequality* (2012), although not expressly socialist, nevertheless approach today's social, economic, and moral questions in a manner that would appeal to many socialists. Perhaps before deciding whether to consign socialism to the past, we should understand what it is we are considering dismissing.

What Is Socialism?

Although the word *socialism* in a narrow economic sense refers to government ownership of the means of production, it is also inherently political—much more so than conservatism and liberalism, which have a life, a meaning, and a utility in the wider world. Socialism refers to a

political organization or system dedicated to bringing about a specific kind of state or society. Socialism came into the political discourse in the 1820s and 1830s, became a major player on the world stage (outside of north America) after World War I, and ceased to be a major world force around the time of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 (the Chinese exception notwithstanding).

Although it may be easy to locate, socialism is notoriously difficult to define. We might start by considering the aims of the British Labour Party, avowedly socialist for much of its existence. Clause Four of the party constitution, written in 1918, sought to:

secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service.

This conception is the gist of socialism: It constitutes an attempt to create a society in which rewards and efforts are shared equally through public control of the major agencies that shape people's lives.

The Origins of Socialism

The word “socialist” first made its appearance in November 1827 when Robert Owen's *Co-operative Magazine* advanced the principle that cooperation was superior to competition and that consequently capital should be “socially” and not privately owned. In France shortly after, socialism was discussed, if not exactly championed, by Pierre Leroux in *The Individual and Socialism* (1834) and by the novelist and social critic Marie Roch Louis Reybaud in *Studies on Modern Reformers or Socialists* (1841). Continental writers were responding to earlier debates prompted by the writings of the so-called Young Hegelians, a disparate group of German thinkers inspired by aspects of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's theories concerning the nature of liberty. This group included Karl Marx and

Friedrich Engels. Owen outlined a critique of contemporary capitalism that was two-pronged, the one moral and the other economic. The moral critique argued that people *should* be far more equal than they were and that greater equality could most judiciously be brought about through the social ownership of industries and enterprises. The second critique suggested that social ownership was not simply morally superior but also more economically efficient. Under socialism people *could* be more equal; not only would the cake be more fairly divided, but also it would be larger. Similar arguments infused the work of continental writers such as Leroux and Reybaud and of several Young Hegelians. The emergence of socialism in the early nineteenth century was a response to the appalling living and working conditions with which the newly created industrial working class had to contend in Europe.

From the beginning, however, equality was a contested concept, chiefly because it had never existed. Inequality, on the other hand, was everywhere, and it was growing. It is easy to see why socialist thinkers might believe that a more equal society was more desirable; but it is not at first so easy to see why they believed it to be feasible. After all, there were many who believed that inequality was either the natural or the God-given basis of a stable social order. So where does the belief in the feasibility of equality have its origin?

The Moral Argument

The moral case for egalitarianism draws its inspiration from Judeo-Christian tradition and more especially from the teachings of Christ himself. After all, Christ had been a manual worker, and when he told the pious young man who sought to follow him to give his wealth up to the poor, he seemed to be advocating a society of economic equality. The Bible states that in the first Christian community, those who owned property sold it and redistributed the proceeds “unto every man according as he had need” (Acts 4:35). The socialists’ case for founding the ideology on Christian teaching seems strong; it was often said that British socialism, for example, owed more to Methodism, and certainly to the Christian inspiration of John Ruskin, than to Marxism. Despite the opulence of the medieval Church, at

Christianity's core was the fundamental belief that all people are created in the likeness of God and equal in his sight.

It would be difficult to establish that popular movements such as the Peasants' Revolt in England (1381) were prompted by a belief in equality as opposed to a more human desire to ease poverty. Nevertheless, some of its leaders, such as the friar John Ball, were moral egalitarians; so too were the revolutionary movements during the English Civil War, notably, the Diggers and the Levellers, who believed that social equality was the essential precondition for the flourishing of liberty and the creation of community. Later, the French revolutionaries, or at least some of them, also claimed that their struggle was to bring about that condition of equality that was the birthright of all and the prerequisite of liberty and community, or fraternity. So nineteenth-century socialists inherited these essentially *moral* claims, which they considered to be natural and eternal. But what gave the drive for equality greater force in the early nineteenth century was the growth of industrial capitalism; it seemed to destroy even the possibility of equality and hence of liberty and community. Socialists would have to take it in hand.

The Economic Argument

The economic argument in favor of socialist equality was based on the simple assumption that competition was economically inefficient and irrational and did not match cooperation. These essentially economic arguments were pursued energetically on the European continent. Here socialist thinkers took inspiration from the rationalism of the Enlightenment. Henri de Saint-Simon was primarily concerned with making industry, in the widest sense, more efficient. He argued for the establishment of a "Council of Newtons," consisting of eminent scientists, managing directors who would govern the world rationally so as to promote the welfare of all. The creation of wealth, he believed, was the most important human activity since it led to happiness, and the process had to be socialized in order to be planned optimally. "Rule over men," he said—although some say the phrase was actually Comte's—"should be replaced by the administration of things" (1823, 4–5)—a call later given wider currency by Marx, Engels, and the early Fabians. Pierre-Joseph Proudhon

was another uncompromising critic of social divisions based on property. Private property, he declared famously, is nothing but theft; property and wealth should be communally owned and administered.

By far the most important continental thinker was Karl Marx. His critique of capitalism began with a fundamentally moral concern: Humankind is a species being and has a species activity, labor. To find fulfillment, humans must “objectify” their labor in an end product. But under capitalism, workers have no control over the process or product of their labor. Under capitalism, humankind becomes alienated from the fruit of its labor, from the activity of labor, and from its fellow beings, especially from the exploiters of its labor, the capitalists. Why haven’t the workers thrown off this alienating yoke? Because their consciousness is “false,” that is to say, blinded or mistaken. It is not consciousness that determines humankind’s social existence, said Marx, but social existence that determines consciousness. And what determines social existence? The “relations of production” or the way economic life is organized. At this point, Marx’s critique becomes firmly an economic one. Since the relations of production are dominated by the capitalist class, it follows that *all* the institutions that help to shape people’s attitudes are also dominated by the values of capitalism, thus, molding people’s ideas and attitudes (or consciousness). This concept was elaborated later by Antonio Gramsci, who referred to it as “cultural hegemony.” But this state of affairs could not continue forever because a proletarian revolution would inevitably occur. Why inevitably? Because all history hitherto had been driven by revolution, and capitalism’s internal contradictions would lead ineluctably to the growing immiseration of the proletariat, until finally a “true” consciousness of their position would be *forced* on workers, resulting in the final, proletarian revolution and socialism.

But who would lead the revolution? The proletariat could hardly manage such a grandiose objective alone. There would have to be a transitional stage between the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of the final form of socialism, communism, when strong leadership, a “dictatorship of the proletariat,” would be required from socialist intellectuals. Eventually the state would wither away, allowing socialist communism to emerge.

Marx's theories were to have a profound influence on the history of the twentieth century.

The Conflict Within Socialism

It might be thought that a belief in equality could only draw strength from these two lines of criticism of capitalism, what we have called the moral and the economic. The subsequent story of socialism shows that such was not to be the case. The moralists tended to believe in building socialist equality upward, upon the moral values of ordinary people, whereas the economists' goal of an efficiently run society implied a socialism that would be imposed and administered by a trained elite who would run society in what it considered to be the interests of all. These differences were sufficiently profound to prompt a later observation that the divisions within socialism were just as bitter as conflicts between socialism and competing ideologies. Indeed, in *Socialism* (1975), Robert Berki argued that socialism should be viewed "not as a single thing, but a range, an area, an open texture, a self contradiction" (p. 17). The fundamental dichotomy in socialism was implicit in its original objectives, so it was inevitable that socialist organizations or indeed states would reflect Berki's "self-contradictions."

In his analysis of socialism, Berki devises not two but four styles of socialism: What we have called economic, he calls rationalist; then he subdivides what we have called the moralist into the social democratic, the egalitarian, and the libertarian. He then aligns his four forms of socialism, not entirely successfully, with geographic regions, showing that the reformist, social-democratic form has prevailed predominantly in western Europe and Australasia; the rationalist, in the command economies of the Soviet Union and eastern Europe; the egalitarian, in the developing nations where anticolonialism elided into revolutionary socialist zeal; and finally the libertarian, in the affluent First World with its disdain for the values of capitalism, especially among disaffected young people and their championing of individual freedom. He manages to bring together theory and geography in a comprehensive structure that allows distinctions and comparisons to be drawn.

Western “Social Democracy”

What distinguishes Berki’s social democracy (our moralism) is its faith in what Norman Dennis and A. H. Halsey call the good sense of ordinary people who exhibited an instinctive commitment to brotherhood, *koinonia* (Berki 1975, 5–6) or what William Morris referred to as fellowship whose absence was hell, was death (Morris 1973, 51). This commitment shaped Western democratic parties such as the British Labour Party. For Karl Kautsky, social democracy represented specifically the union of socialism and the working-class movement (laborism), and Berki endorses this idea. The history of the British Labour Party exemplifies this union clearly; the party can trace its origins back to the founding of the Independent Labour Party at a meeting in Bradford in 1893 representing the trade unions and the socialist societies. What united most, although not all, social democrats, was a belief in parliament as the engine of change separating them from those who sought to use trade unions more directly, syndicalists like Georges Sorel, who wished to use the general strike as a means to bring governments down.

It is no coincidence that the electoral successes of such parties followed the extension of the suffrage to the industrial working class in western Europe and Australasia. The first avowedly socialist Labour government was formed in 1910 in Australia. But socialist parties were soon obliged to compromise. In 1919, the German Social Democrat Party, in its Bad Godesburg Resolution, incorporated important aspects of free enterprise into its program. After World War II, socialist governments were common in western Europe, but their socialism was reformist, not revolutionary. The electorally successful social-democratic parties in Scandinavia incorporated elements of liberalism into their programs. In Britain, the Labour government of 1945–50 represented the apogee of democratic-socialist achievement, creating what S. H. Beer referred to as a collectivist state. In the 50 years that followed, this state was administered mostly by Conservative governments, an irony not lost on Labour leaders who, from the late 1950s onward, sought to reposition the party, to “modernize” to meet social change and voter aspirations in a generally more affluent society. This process was common throughout western Europe. Only when Labour lost its fourth successive election in the most favorable

circumstances in 1992 did party leaders make the kind of changes that could truly be described as transformative. These did not take the form of a readjustment of socialism's basic principles; instead, they took the form of a *rejection* of traditional socialism. Social democracy has played a major role in the creation of a western European polity that represents a compromise between the entrepreneurial energy of capitalism and the social conscience of socialism. But in the process, it jettisoned traditional socialism.

Rationalism

Lenin founded the first Marxist socialist state in Russia in 1917 through the agency of what he called the “vanguard” party. No democratic party could flourish in a country so inured to autocratic rule, and Russian workers and peasants could never aspire to a revolutionary consciousness. Marxism would have to be adapted. Lenin's answer was to amalgamate socialism and electrification. He and Leon Trotsky called this strategy the New Economic Plan. By the time of his death in 1924, Lenin had established a formidable bureaucratic machine, which he bequeathed to the pragmatic and despotic Joseph Stalin. For Stalin the basic economic law of socialism was the expansion and perfection of production. This would lead to an improvement in living conditions, but Stalin rejected that “reactionary, petit-bourgeois absurdity” of equality. His attempts to revitalize the Soviet economy and modernize its agriculture led to massive starvation. After Stalin's death—although not immediately after—the Soviet Union became richer, more powerful, and more respected for its technological achievements. This was the socialism that Schumpeter had thought would conquer the world. But after World War II, the sclerotic centralized economy began to fail, and a disastrous war in Afghanistan further depleted confidence. The centrally planned economies of the eastern European members of the Soviet bloc similarly began to falter, and by the late 1980s, the Soviet empire simply imploded. Rationalist socialism had failed in the so-called command economies of eastern Europe.

Berki's categorization of socialism is problematical in some respects, and the development of the People's Republic of China poses a major problem that he did not foresee. He categorized China among egalitarian socialist states; today we would surely see it as rationalist. Its mixture of economic

liberalism and political authoritarianism approximates to the Fabian Bernard Shaw's elitist notion of an effective socialism whose fundamental task was to maximize welfare, not democracy. (Fabian money contributed to the establishment of the London School of Economics to educate the rationalist elite that would rule in the interests of all.) We can speak of a Chinese rationalist model, and although we cannot assume its permanence, we can surely classify it today as an economic success. This model is not to be confused with the so-called market socialist theory, which envisages a benign central agency controlling the economy overall but encouraging individual and local participation and initiative, especially through worker-owned cooperatives, in the economy and in government. The primary working example of market socialism (or economic democracy) was the former Yugoslavia, whose implosion was the result of ethnic and linguistic divisions rather than of economic failure.

Egalitarian Socialism

Berki located egalitarian socialism within the developing world. Lenin himself had thought that such countries would produce a victorious revolution that could provide a detonator for revolution across the globe. Lenin's hope seemed to blossom during the 1970s. Socialist or communist regimes were established in many parts of the world: for instance in Angola, the Congo, Ethiopia, Kampuchea (Cambodia), Mozambique, Somalia, Vietnam, and Yemen. Many others operated forms of what they called socialism, such as Egypt, Algeria, and Libya. What was a hope for Lenin was a dread for the former colonial powers and the United States, and they sought to minimize the spread of socialism. However, this seemingly impressive array has since withered, with only the Republic of Cuba, post-Hugo Chavez's Venezuela, the Lao People's Republic, North Korea, and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam still avowedly socialist. But except for impoverished North Korea, the economy of each is now increasingly capitalist, and each has an unenviable record on human rights. If these states were ever constructed along genuine Marxist-Leninist lines, only the notion of the vanguard party remains. Some vanguards took their socialist zeal to excesses, none more so than the regime of Pol Pot in Kampuchea, where the vanguard Khmer Rouge sought to exterminate practically the entire bourgeoisie. It is estimated that more than 2 million people in a

population of some 11 million were murdered because of their “antirevolutionary” stance. Berki’s egalitarian socialism seems to be disappearing entirely or eliding into some approximation of the Chinese model.

Libertarian Socialism

Finally, to Berki’s last category, libertarian socialism could be linked to the anarchist movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Anarchistic leaders such as Michael Bakunin and later Peter Kropotkin were anathema to Marx, who saw them as unscientific romantics. Bakunin could exult in what he called the creative joy of destruction and plan the overthrow of capitalism, but the anarchist-libertarian influence on the development of socialism in practice was insubstantial. Nonetheless, the rift between Bakunin and Marx disabled the early attempt to organize socialism internationally, although it was World War I, when most socialists put patriotism before socialism, that provided the coup de grace to the international movement, allowing it to be hijacked by the Soviet Union. Nowadays groups claiming to be radical-socialist or anarchist are capable, especially through the astute tactical use of social media, of mounting substantial acts of civil unrest, especially during the various economic summits, but it is doubtful that Berki would have devoted even a chapter to them were he writing today. One thinker who has exercised a considerable influence for several decades is the linguist Noam Chomsky, who describes himself as both a libertarian socialist and an anarcho-syndicalist. In the late 1960s, however, things were different. In May 1968, for example, a spontaneous popular revolt spread through Paris and then more widely and came close to toppling the de Gaulle regime. Throughout the West, and especially the United States, anti-Vietnam protests brought turmoil. But these movements were not specifically socialist, and indeed the Paris riots were opposed by the French communist party. Rebellion and violence were in the air and left a legacy of leftist civic terrorism, but no system of government was in serious danger. In short, then, libertarian socialism, too, has finally proved a failure, and it never enjoyed the early successes that other forms of socialism experienced.

Conclusion

At the present time, socialism is thus everywhere in retreat. It is true that as major Western economies come under danger of collapsing after the recent banking and financial crisis, the opportunity for socialist parties (or right-wing nationalist parties, for that matter) to play a part in confronting those crises might present itself, although their scope for independent action would be limited unless the global economy failed to regain its balance. In the meantime, the challenge is to understand why a system of thought that was hugely influential for almost 100 years and that, in its several guises, was dedicated to a more equal and efficient society from which most would benefit, should have failed so comprehensively. Some analysts, including Chomsky, fault modern socialism's betrayal of democracy as its central flaw, a charge leveled originally at the USSR especially by writers such as George Orwell (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*) and Arthur Koestler (*Darkness at Noon*). But this "betrayal" can also be seen as having been partly fostered by the United States and other capitalist powers, which have overtly and covertly intervened to prevent the possibility of democratic socialism succeeding in such countries as Chile under Salvador Allende.

We began with a simple distinction between moral and economic (then rational) socialism. Socialists believed that the capitalist system shaped people in its own image; change the system, and people would no longer need to be selfish and competitive. Yet socialist societies proved unable to shape citizens into anything other than the often selfish, sometimes peevish, and usually fallible creatures of capitalism. Perhaps this was humankind's nature, and Marx had been wrong to believe that it could be changed by creating a fairer social system. For every heroically productive Aleksey Stakhanov, there seemed to be at least an equal number of wasters and several cheats. Even in the Soviet Union, home to the great socialist experiment, socialism failed to transform the citizenry. The Soviet leadership beat a hasty retreat from moralism into rationalism, resulting in a rigid bureaucracy at best and terror at worst. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that socialism has helped to shape most modern political systems outside North America, and we should remember that it was to the state that most of the great institutions of international capitalism turned during recent banking crises.

According to Richard Rorty, the real pathos of the final scene in George Orwell's *Animal Farm* was that it portrayed much of the history of the twentieth century: the rise and fall of socialism. Perhaps. But today we live in another century.

Stephen Ingle

See also [Chomsky, Noam](#); [Communism, Varieties of](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Equality and Egalitarianism](#); [Fourier, Charles](#); [Guild Socialism](#); [Human Nature, Theories of](#); [Lenin and Leninism](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [National Socialism](#); [Owen, Robert](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Planning](#); [Property, Theories of](#); [Saint-Simon, Henri de](#); [Sorel, Georges](#); [Social Democracy](#); [Stalin and Stalinism](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Trotsky, Leon](#); [Young Hegelians](#)

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Georges Sorel (1847–1922), the French philosopher best known for his *Reflections on Violence* (1908), has been variously classified as an anarchist, a socialist, a syndicalist, and even a forerunner of fascism. Born in Cherbourg, he studied at the École Polytechnique in Paris and was employed in several different cities as a public-works engineer. Beginning in the mid-1880s, he began to contribute essays to the leading French Marxist journals, and he corresponded with a wide range of philosophers including Henry Bergson, Benedetto Croce, the prominent anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, and with Karl Marx himself. As the Marxist movement fragmented in the 1890s, he generally supported Eduard Bernstein's version. Gradually he came to embrace revolutionary syndicalism as the best alternative to capitalism. But in his heterogeneous writings, he explored many other political ideas, from monarchism to anarchism. He deplored the 1914–18 war but enthusiastically supported the Bolshevik revolution. Although he died before fascism was fully established in Italy, he was not sympathetic to it, despite later claims that he influenced and even supported Benito Mussolini—who later called him the “master of syndicalism” whose writings “contributed most to form the discipline, energy and power of the fascist cohorts” (Midlarsky 2011, 92).

The militant trade union movement in France around the turn of the century (as well as corresponding agitation in Italy and Spain) drew him toward syndicalism, and he began to write the essays that eventually were published as his most influential work, *Reflections on Violence*. Two

features of this work are responsible for Sorel's enduring reputation: his glorification of violence as a necessary engine of social progress, and his analysis of the role of myth in revolutionary change. The gradual development of socialism through education and debate, Sorel said, was a pipe dream—or worse, a cover for so-called socialists' acquiescence in the bourgeois, capitalist order of the times. He warned that socialism and capitalism might in the future form an alliance, and he was right. Furthermore, he distrusted modern science as a tool of the established order. History demonstrates, he said, that only organized violence brings about real change. To summon up and direct that violence, a movement needs a powerful myth. Sorel explores the role of myth in past successful breakthroughs from early Christianity to the French Revolution, and he proposes to devise one for syndicalism. A mythical goal is required to draw us on into the next stage of history. It would take the form of the general strike—not of course a new idea among revolutionaries but one capable of being elevated to mythic status. The general strike could bring together all the disparate branches of socialism and all the working classes in an exalted sense of common purpose and would finally overthrow the capitalist order.

Sorel has been roundly condemned by philosophers of left and right for his advocacy of violence, but at no time did he endorse indiscriminate acts of terrorism or spontaneous destruction. Revolutionary violence must be carefully planned and directed toward specific targets most appropriate to the accomplishment of syndicalist goals. Syndicalism, as Sorel defined it, meant the violent abolition of the political state and of the capitalists who finance and control it, to be replaced by trade union control of the means of production. There are varieties of syndicalism, and not all of them call for violence or for general strikes, but Sorel dismissed them all as ineffective. From the standpoint of political philosophy, he can be characterized as an anarchist (and indeed many anarchists claim him), but he belongs to the tradition—always a minority among anarchists—that not only condones but also celebrates violence.

The concept of “myth” has also drawn criticism down on Sorel. But the attacks have largely been off target because Sorel's critics misinterpret what he means by “myth.” The ancient Greeks would have understood him: “Myths” are not the same thing as “lies” or falsified history but narratives

about who we are and why we are like that. In recent times, fascist movements have insisted that certain myths (such as Aryan superiority and the quasi-divine status of the leader) are objectively true. Sorel would have protested that such insistence misses the point.

Sorel published a number of other books and many articles, but his reputation rests on *Reflections on Violence*. In other works, he analyzed Catholic thought, ancient Roman history, the philosophy of Socrates, and the Dreyfus case.

Thomas Martin

See also [Anarchism](#); [Bergson, Henri](#); [Fanon, Frantz](#); [Fascism](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Revolution](#); [Syndicalism](#); [Terrorism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Gregory Jackson Robert Jackson

Sovereignty, State

Sovereignty, state

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Sovereignty, State

Sovereignty is the authority vested in the highest offices and institutions of states: their supremacy over all other authorities in a country as defined by constitutional law, and their political and legal independence from each other, as recognized by international law. *Supremacy* means the highest and final authority from which no further appeal is available. A sovereign is not subordinate to anybody. *Independence* means constitutionally separate and self-governing. A sovereign is not somebody else's dependency. Exercising sovereignty is having the final word.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines *sovereign* as somebody "who has supremacy or rank above, or authority over, others; a superior; a ruler, governor, lord, or master." That is a broad concept. The core usage, however, is clearly political. A sovereign is "the recognized supreme ruler of a people or country." Sovereignty is "the supreme controlling power in communities . . .; absolute and independent authority." Sovereignty understood as state supremacy and independence was clear by the sixteenth century. The term *state* has a similar historical trajectory, at first signifying diverse meanings: "the governing body of a town or city" (the German word *stadt*, as in Hamburg *stadt*, still carries that meaning); "the rulers, nobles or great men of a realm; the government." What we ordinarily mean by "the state" also becomes fully evident by the end of the sixteenth century: "a body of people occupying a defined territory and organised under a sovereign government": a sovereign state. That shift in usage is an important marker of the political change from medieval to modern.

The notion of sovereignty thus came to be identified, almost exclusively, with the special and exclusive authority of the state or the nation. The word acquired meanings that are characteristic of the modern era: “supreme domination, authority or rule”; “a territory under the rule of a sovereign, or existing as an independent state” (*Oxford English Dictionary*). “Sovereignty” became a qualifier of the term *state*, which implies that some states may not be sovereign: colonial states, states subject to a suzerain power, and “states” of the United States.

Sovereignty subsequently takes another turn in regard to the source or location of supreme authority in a state. Originally that location is the ruler (and his or her dynasty): the sovereign. Later it is parliament and later again the people or nation. The *Oxford English Dictionary* quotes John Stuart Mill’s definition of representative government as capturing a central usage in the modern meaning of the term: “That form of government in which the sovereignty, or supreme controlling power in the last resort, is vested in the entire aggregate of the community.” In other words, it is referring to popular sovereignty.

Sovereignty is a form of authority, but it can easily be construed and interpreted as irresistible or compelling power. The test of a state’s sovereignty could be seen to reside in its capacity to enforce laws and implement policies. Or it could be seen to rest on its capabilities in dealing with foreign rivals and competitors, for example, in military conflicts or economic competitions. Power and authority are closely related ideas, but they are not identical ideas. Authority commands, and power executes. Authority is usually defined by offices that people occupy. That is certainly the case with state authority. State power is defined by the instrumental means—the power apparatus and resources—under the control and at the disposal of those same officials.

That relation of authority and power was already made famously clear in the mid-seventeenth century by the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes. In his *Leviathan*, he was careful to distinguish between the “authorization” of a sovereign government via a covenant or social contract and the “power and strength” conferred on a government formed in that manner. Such authorized governments were equipped with the “strength and means” to

maintain domestic peace and providing for the common defense. If governments lacked such power, their authority would be hollow. Covenants are categorically different than swords, but “covenants, without the sword, are but words, and of no strength to secure a man at all” ([1651] 1968, Part II, ch. XVII).

A world based on state sovereignty is a world of mutually exclusive territorial jurisdictions: a world without overlapping jurisdictions. Supremacy and independence are not two separate characteristics: They are two facets of one overall characteristic. Facing inward, the sovereign is the supreme authority in the country. There can be only one sovereign within a country—even if its authority is divided constitutionally between two levels of government, as in a federal state. A federal constitution merely specifies where supremacy resides on any specific issue, that is, whether at the federal level or at the state or provincial level of authority. Facing outward, a sovereign is but one among many such authorities around the world. In the outward exercise of their sovereignty, states are never in a position of supremacy. They are in a position of independence.

Robert Jackson

See also [Authority](#); [Constitutionalism](#); [Federalism](#); [General Will](#); [Humanitarian Intervention](#); [State](#), [Theories of the](#)

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Clive E. Hill Clive E. Hill

Spencer, Herbert

Spencer, herbert

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Spencer, Herbert

The English scholar Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) is generally credited with making a major contribution to the development of sociology in the nineteenth century, although his writings actually covered an extremely wide range of subjects, partly because he saw himself as the author of a complete worldview—a “synthetic philosophy”—which universalized a theory of progress through evolution. Spencer’s works had a significant impact on the biological sciences (he coined the phrase “the survival of the fittest” in 1864) and on political thought, as he was a formidable advocate of an ultra-individualist version of Victorian liberalism. In fact, his vision of the good society involved such a small conception of the role of government that he might even be described in modern parlance as a *minarchist*, while his evolutionary thought anticipated some aspects of socio-biology and functionalist sociology. Spencer’s critics have often accused him of being an apologist for Victorian social hierarchy, but a more complicated picture emerges if one considers his relatively humble social origins and the controversies that attached to some of his views on religion, evolution, land ownership, and imperialism.

Key Concepts and Influences

One of the central concepts of Spencer’s theories was the “individuation” or “differentiation” of things from their immediate environment, an emphasis that led him to frequently stress the importance of individuality and

specialization. No universal mechanism explained this pluralistic tendency in the world, although, as we shall see later, he believed that it was a common consequence of the tendency for natural processes to have more than one effect and for entities that were originally homogenous to become increasingly diverse or heterogeneous. At one and the same time, Spencer frequently emphasized the *interdependence* of nature in general, and human beings in particular, by using concepts/metaphors such as “the social organism” and “the physiological division of labour.” The latter concept was a redeployment of a well-known argument from economics to biology—and then on to sociology—to the effect that cooperative subdivision and specialization of tasks was a more efficient way of using both energy and resources than self-sufficiency. Like many of the Romantics, Spencer assumed that both creativity and productivity were desirable side effects of an unregulated social order, and he argued that (as a general proposition) every human being should be free to do as he or she willed, provided that this will did not impinge on a similar freedom for others. This idea became known as Spencer’s equal freedom principle. Spencer did not attend a university, and he displayed some of the stereotypical traits of the autodidact, for example, by emphasizing the originality of his own work and showing a certain reluctance to acknowledge his intellectual debts.

Spencer’s intellectual industry and habitual iconoclasm are still admired by scholars today, but his system-building is less in tune with both modern and postmodern sensibilities. It can also be argued that his “scientific” emphasis on the power of collective action contradicts his normative belief in personal freedom.

Spencer the Man

Herbert Spencer’s father was a Derbyshire schoolmaster who educated his son into the English tradition of evangelical, individualistic Christianity from an early age. This induction was reinforced by a period of a little over three years—1833 to 1836—which Herbert spent as the personal tutee of one of his uncles in Somerset, before entering the world of work. The most notable outcome of this education was that the young Spencer’s intellectual outlook tended to balance the claims of natural science with those of

literature and the humanities; a balance that allowed him to develop a variety of novel (and not so novel) hypotheses of his own.

Spencer made his living as a railway engineer from 1837 to 1841 and as a provincial journalist in the years 1841 to 1848. The traditional view has been that Spencer was essentially a dilettante during this period, although some scholars have taken a special interest in an early political publication, a series of letters on *The Proper Sphere of Government*, which were also issued as a pamphlet. Attempts to make a fortune through industrial and medical inventions failed, but his workplace experiences reinforced his lifelong interest in mathematics and the natural sciences. In 1848, he moved from the Midlands to London with the intention of becoming a full-time professional writer, an endeavor that was ultimately successful. After receiving a small inheritance, Spencer spent three years (1853–56) traveling in Britain and Europe, before eventually resettling in London (1856–98) and finally moving to Brighton in 1898, where he eventually died of an unspecified nervous illness in December 1903. Like many Victorians, Spencer believed in the superiority of commerce over militarism, and during this closing episode of his life, he wrote several letters criticizing British imperialism in Africa, and the second Boer War from 1899 to 1902 in particular. Moreover, he showed the strength of his concern by republishing them in an expanded version of his later writings called *Various Fragments* (1897–1900).

Spencer the Writer

Spencer's first book to receive significant public attention was an unorthodox text on ethics and politics (*Social Statics*, 1850–51) that sought to apply his "equal freedom principle" to a variety of practical issues. Then, in 1855, he published the much less successful *The Principles of Psychology*, which attempted to explain human intelligence in terms of the general evolution of the species. This relative failure encouraged Spencer to undertake the grand project of a ten-volume "System of Synthetic Philosophy" to both publicize and explain his general conception of evolution and reply to his critics. The "System" took up most of the rest of his adult life partly because several volumes were amended and republished several times before his death in 1903, although the final volume was

eventually completed in 1896. The major components of the “System” were *First Principles of a New System of Philosophy* (1862), *The Principles of Biology* (1864–67), *The Principles of Psychology*, *The Principles of Sociology* (1876), and *The Principles of Ethics* (1879). Other important books by Spencer were *Education: Intellectual, Moral, Physical* (1860), *The Man Versus the State* (1883), *Descriptive Sociology* (1867–81; and posthumously 1910–34), *The Study of Sociology* (1873), and the posthumous *An Autobiography* (1904)—mostly written in the 1880s.

The Synthetic Philosophy

The religious orthodoxy of mid-Victorian Britain was a fairly literal-minded form of Christianity, regardless of denomination, and so Spencer’s evolutionary philosophy was often charged with both atheism and materialism. This was because, despite trying to appear agnostic rather than deliberately irreligious, it set aside the question of the ultimate causes of things as “The Unknowable.” The basic assumption of the “Synthetic Philosophy” was that force is universally persistent and matter is indestructible, although motion and matter are periodically absorbed and dissipated (“dissolution”) into simpler forms when systems become over-complex and unsustainable. However, in most cases, the “multiplication of effects” over time favors the development of complex bodies in both the inorganic and the organic portions of the universe. The best-known expressions of this “induction” as a “rational generalization” were Spencer’s famous 1857 statements in his essay “Progress, Its Law and Cause,” that “Every active force produces more than one change—every cause produces more than one effect,” and that “throughout creation there must have gone on, and must still go on, a never-ceasing transformation of the homogenous into the heterogeneous” (*Essays* 1897, 37). At much the same time, he concluded that (at least in principle) it should be possible to organize the whole of human knowledge on the basis of the concepts that have just been outlined: multiplicity of effects and evolution from simple to complex.

In later life, Spencer asserted that, as early as 1840, he had become a believer in evolution and accepted that every organism had “arisen by progressive modifications, physically caused and inherited” (as he put it in

Volume I, Part III, of his *Autobiography*, 1904, 176–77). This idea later appeared in Spencer's first publications, and when he was writing *The Principles of Biology* in the 1860s, he concluded that simple forms of life were inherently unstable and prone to change because they were unequally exposed to the primeval forces ("motions") assumed by his synthetic philosophy. As well as noting the effects of heat and light, Spencer speculated that ongoing "pressure on living tissue, by modifying the processes going on . . . [within] it . . . gradually diminishes and finally destroys its power of resuming the outline it had at first." As a consequence, all organisms sought to reestablish equilibrium with their environment through adaptation, which led to the observable phenomenon of organic evolution. Furthermore, complex beings could be said to be "superior" to (or more "efficient" than) their primitive predecessors because they embodied more completely the principle of "the physiological division of labour."

To reach this state of superiority, the more complex species had had to evolve from simpler ancestors. Spencer argued that some individual organisms that changed their behavior to suit their environment thereby created the possibility of alterations to particular organs (say a bird's beak), which could then be inherited, and which could in turn ultimately lead to a general reorganization of the body creating whole new species. Spencer called this "*direct equilibration*," although it was, in fact, the same argument that Jean-Baptiste Lamarck had used several decades earlier regarding evolution through "acquired characteristics." However, Spencer acknowledged that this could not explain all known examples of biological development and he drew on the recently published Darwinian concept of "natural selection" to complete the argument. Accordingly, the "indirect equilibration" of a species and its environment occurred when only a part of a species survived exposure to a selective environmental pressure and an inherited (but static) characteristic allowed the remnant to continue and procreate. Moreover, when a whole species failed to adapt successfully and became extinct—thereby failing the test of "fitness" provided by its environment—the natural world as a whole could be said to have returned to equilibrium despite the temporary loss of diversity.

Methodologically, as well as normatively, Spencer usually took an individualist approach to his studies, although he sometimes placed greater emphasis on social structures and functions. Thus, in the early part of his career, he believed in the efficacy of phrenology: the study of the external structure of the human head in order to understand the personality of the individual head's owner. However, when it came to developing his "Synthetic Philosophy," he did not defend phrenology and contended that human consciousness had evolved as a result of general physical evolution, rather than arising from the state of one particular organ (i.e., the skull). Spencer argued that the sophistication of human thought and language reflected, and corresponded to, the sophistication of the structure and functions of the human nervous system, even if the "substance of Mind" itself could not be known. All the higher animals (and not just humans) made use of mental processes to adjust to their environments and the nervous system changed slowly over time, so that both the physical adaptation and the corresponding association of ideas could be transmitted across the generations. In other words, instinct, emotion, will, and reason were all inherited adaptations that conformed to Lamarckian principles, and a reliable system of psychology would be much closer to zoology than to traditional philosophy.

Gender, Ethics, and Politics

Spencer assumed that the social life of a human group was largely explicable in terms of the psychologies of its individual members, which, as we have already seen, were partly determined by their evolutionary origins but also by their physiological qualities. For example, a tribe of tall people would have a disposition that favored running, and later hunting and sport. In turn, this led him to suppose that the bodily differences between the sexes were sociologically important as well. Thus, in the early work, *Social Statics*, Spencer argued that "differences of bodily organization" and "trifling mental variations" between the sexes should not prevent women from enjoying equal political and civil rights, but in *The Principles of Sociology*, he abandoned this view and argued more conservatively. There, he stated that a woman's intellectual and emotional growth was inhibited by the physiological process of child-bearing, and that the traditional combination of male aggression and female submission had been socially

selected in the earliest stages of human evolution. Hence, Spencer became a firm opponent of what later came to be known as feminism, and he argued that modern women retained a sufficient measure of social power to defend their own interests and to contribute to the education of *all* children within the family. The latter function was particularly important because it ensured the maintenance and development of the charitable ethic that the effective operation of the Spencerian laissez-faire utopia clearly required.

Indeed, one of the most consistently expounded aspects of the Spencerian philosophy was its ethical dimension, for Spencer frequently repeated the equal freedom principle that he first put forward in *Social Statics* (1851): “Every man has freedom to do all that he wills, provided he infringes not the equal freedom of any other man” (*Social Statics*, 1896, 55).

Subsequently, several of Spencer’s later works clarified the alleged benefits of combining utilitarian motives with liberal actions on the same grounds that he had used in his evolutionary psychology (an argument that was by no means beyond challenge but that he seems to have been particularly satisfied with). More specifically, he contended that pleasure enhances function and that negative liberty establishes an “instinctive” connection between actions and consequences, so that individuals can acquire moral agency and develop their own projects. A measure of interdependence associated with voluntary cooperation and restraint based on contract was an inevitable feature of “higher” societies, but this was best reached through limiting political activity, as opposed to engineering it via a system of paternalistic dependence on a political or social elite. Thus, in Spencer’s ethics, good conduct was defined as action that maximized “rational” utility (for everyone) in a society arranged in accordance with the “law of equal freedom.” At the same time, Spencer was eventually forced to admit that his evolutionary principles did not add anything to moral judgment and calculation of a much more traditional kind, and that he had simply made a different, as opposed to a superior, argument for liberalism.

Spencer was a man of his time in that he assumed it was both possible and desirable to construct an objective science of society, but he sometimes recognized that social action should be interpreted in a more empathetic way, with reference to the subjective beliefs of individual human beings, as opposed to so-called objective causes. However, the “functionalist”

dimension of Spencer's thought (whose existence was noted earlier) was particularly prominent in his periodic discussions of economic life, and the physical, biological, and economic conditions of a society, plus the interdependent arrangement of its parts, were far more important to Spencerian analysis than the "independent" role of social ideologies or personal beliefs. "Public Opinion" was important for Spencer's social theory as a whole, but it was conditioned by social and economic factors, which operated in a reasonably regular and "lawlike" fashion. He frequently described human society as an "organism" and drew attention to common features shared with living creatures, such as regulative systems (e.g., governments and nerve systems), sustaining systems (e.g., productive industries and nutritional organs), and distributive systems (e.g., railways, roads, veins, and arteries).

Nevertheless, although an animal organism had a single consciousness that organized its whole being, a "social organism" enjoyed a rich and varied consciousness in each and every "cell" or person. A trained sociologist had the ability to capture this consciousness, at least in an abstract and general way, but it did not follow that legislators could derive a binding and intelligible general will from this. Instead, according to Spencer, society had no moral personality that could justify claims against the interests of its members; it could only progress when enough of those members agreed to the justice of certain practices in the coalition known as "public opinion." Such changes, moreover, were deemed to parallel the zoological process of evolution, so that liberal politics and utilitarian ethics could be seen as "acquired characteristics" that benefited the whole of society, even if, in practice, these theories were contested by conservative and socialist thinkers of a variety of hues, whose ideas Spencer felt obliged to rebut in more polemical works, such as *The Man Versus the State*. In Spencer's sociology, the two great epochs of human history were "militant society" (feudalism) and "industrial society" (capitalism), which had arisen after the original evolution, in prehistoric and ancient times, of the organizing structure of life from family to tribe to nation. As a result of its systematic emphasis on warfare, "militant society" had been superseded because it was unable to allow civilization to progress by "individuation," in particular, the increasingly complex versions of the division of labor that characterized "industrial society." In keeping with the general concept of the "social

organism,” a liberal, market community was presented as a complex and heterogeneous system whose development paralleled that of the “higher” animal organisms because its regulative system—the government and the state—played a specialized and restricted role.

As we shall now see, Spencer did not simply describe the “night-watchman state” metaphorically; he also recommended it with some relish. *The Proper Sphere of Government* (1843) was originally a series of 12 letters that Spencer wrote to a Derbyshire newspaper called *The Nonconformist*, which were subsequently collected together as an independently published pamphlet. This text predates the “synthetic philosophy” but set out many of the views about politics that Spencer held throughout his adult life, and it argued that the true purpose of government was to protect the natural rights of humankind and, in particular, to protect the weak against the powerful. However, Spencer disputed the idea of “the general good” and put forward the view that there was no major cause of poverty except idleness; bad luck was an exception; never the rule. An extremely small, low-tax state was needed to provide cheap and transparent justice, security, and home defense, but industry, trade, charity, education, and health were all best dealt with through voluntary action. To a reader of today, this sounds very much like minarchism or libertarianism. But the radical dimension of Spencer’s views became apparent in his vehement critiques of the Victorian parliament and legal system, of the British empire, of colonization and war (the latter verging on absolute pacifism), and his argument for the enfranchisement of the working class, although he did not specify a particular scheme of franchise.

But could such a small government really cope with the problems of industrialization? Throughout his life, Spencer thought that it could, and although his great rival in the debate about *zoological* evolution, Charles Darwin, sought to show that the dangers of overpopulation (as analyzed 50 years earlier by the English economist, Thomas Robert Malthus) still had a great impact in the biosphere as a whole, Spencer believed that human society could escape that particular threat. In 1852, in the essay “A Theory of Population,” he concluded that the so-called Malthusian trap was an illusion and that the minimal state was best adapted to preside over a scenario where the pressure of population on resources would actually

generate reduced species fertility, increased economic productivity, and the cooperative culture of social sentiments that would sustain and develop liberalism and capitalism into ever more desirable forms, perhaps even eventually reaching a kind of anarchism. In later life, he remained strongly attached to these ideals, but he became increasingly disenchanted with the collectivism of Joseph Chamberlain and the “New Liberals” and the populist element in Gladstonian liberalism: As late as 1881, he was a supporter of the “Anti-Aggression League” that campaigned from within the Liberal Party against William Gladstone’s *de facto* expansionist foreign policy in the name of the famous prime minister’s anti-imperialist “Midlothian” principles.

Instead, in the final quarter of his life, Spencer became closely associated with the conservative school of thought known as “late-Victorian individualism,” most notably through his contribution to the volume of essays *A Plea For Liberty* (1891), edited by Thomas Mackay of “The Liberty and Property Defense League,” an anticollectivist pressure group. However, it should be noted that Spencer merely *appeared* more conservative as he grew older partly because his critics had traveled to “the Left” and partly because the seemingly utopian argument of his most popular early work, *Social Statics*, was actually qualified in a number of respects. For example, one chapter acknowledged the abstract right of civil disobedience to unjust laws—as a corollary of the equal freedom principle—but insisted that its applicability varied “directly as the social morality” was “vicious” (the present) or “virtuous” (the future). Moreover, although a chapter on the land question argued that in the ideal, final phase of “industrial society” everyone would have an equal right to use the Earth’s resources, which could only be ensured through common ownership of land, important conditions were applied to this recommendation. In particular, Spencer argued that the expropriation of most privately owned land (when it was honestly acquired and improved by good management) would involve notable, and probably unaffordable, measures of financial compensation.

Hence, questions of practicality and the distinction between “relative” and “absolute” (that is ideal) ethical principles, which was made explicit in Spencer’s later works on *Ethics*, seem to explain the apparent contradiction

between his earlier and his later politics, plus the recognition on his part that a “land nationalization” argument could be used to justify other socialistic measures of wealth redistribution that were incompatible with the central role of the private entrepreneur in his theories. Yet Spencer’s original formulations were indicative of a certain iconoclastic tendency, given the centrality of land to certain Victorian ideals of “home” and “nobility,” and there was a definite element of inconsistency over time in his attitudes to this subject. Nevertheless, he remains an intriguing and stimulating subject for the modern political researcher.

Clive E. Hill

See also [Comte, Auguste](#); [Conservatism](#); [Darwinism and Social Darwinism](#); [Feminism](#); [Human Nature, Theories of](#); [Liberalism](#); [Libertarianism](#); [Malthus, Thomas Robert](#); [Mill, John Stuart](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Progress](#); [Property, Theories of](#); [Psychoanalysis and Political Thought](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [War and Political Thought](#)

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Ian James Kidd Ian James Kidd

Spengler, Oswald

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Spengler, Oswald

Oswald Spengler (1880–1936) was a “reactionary modernist”—one of a loose group of early twentieth-century German historians, philosophers, and cultural critics whose thought was profoundly shaped by the social and political context of the Weimar Republic. Although he never held an academic or political position, Spengler became an immensely popular and influential writer and ideologue whose diagnoses of the decline of Western culture were informed by an ambitious history of human civilization.

Spengler’s main work is the two-volume doomsday classic *The Decline of the West* (*Der Untergang des Abendlandes*) published in 1917 and 1922. Its deep pessimism was gradually moderated in *Prussianism and Socialism* (*Preussentum und Sozialismus*, 1919)—which praised a “true socialism” characterized by martial virtues such as discipline and self-sacrifice—and in *Man and Technics* (*Der Mensch und die Technik*, 1931), which identified industrial technology as a mode of cultural recovery. Spengler’s later work, *The Hour of Decision* (*Jahre die Entscheidung*, 1933), was banned by the National Socialists for its criticisms of their racial biological ideology. Various other notebooks and sets of correspondence have since been published.

Spengler was born in 1880 into a conservative family and had a lonely childhood. Despite early immersion in classical cultures, and the work of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Friedrich Nietzsche, Spengler’s academic studies were unexceptional and he worked as a private tutor until retiring on

a modest inheritance. Like Nietzsche, Spengler's uneventful life was characterized by psychological isolation and intellectual independence that, coupled with his material poverty, confirmed his perception of himself as a neglected prophet. Spengler died in 1936 shortly after making the strikingly prescient prediction that the Third Reich would disappear within ten years.

Spengler's thought was a reaction to the cultural crisis after World War I and the liberal and egalitarian values of the Weimar Republic. Such reactionary sentiments were invested in a romantic nationalism inherited from Goethe and Nietzsche based on an ennobling conception of the German spirit—the *Volksgeist*. Yet although such stirring affirmations of the supremacy of German culture were welcomed by a disenchanted population with a recent experience of military defeat and political and economic collapse, they generated a problem—namely, how to reconcile these nationalist accounts of Germany's ennobling historical and cultural richness with its obvious state of present crisis.

Spengler responded by articulating the intellectually and historically ambitious “morphology of world-cultures” expressed in *Decline of the West*. Spengler drew on Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's philosophy of history to articulate a cyclical model of the history of human civilizations. Cultures, like organisms, pass through a series of predetermined developmental stages whose transition relies on the presence of isolated visionary figures—like Spengler. Those visionaries begin to reorder society around a “prime symbol”—an object or narrative—which symbolizes its values and identity. For instance, the prime symbol of classical (Greek–Roman) culture was the bold and autonomous individual as represented by the nude statue.

This “morphological” process takes around 1,000 years, which Spengler illustrated using dense descriptions of various “cultural forms” (*gestalt*)—including the “Hindu,” “Magian,” and “Faustian”—and used this to determine that Western culture was entering into its inevitable stage of decline. The power of this thesis lay in its attribution of German decline to irresistible historical forces that could only be described and resolutely faced with the martial virtues—like courage and discipline—which Spengler praised.

Spengler's pessimistic determinism lost its appeal during the economic and political optimism of the early years of National Socialism. Later works, therefore, become more optimistic and activist as Spengler argues that the proper response to inevitable decline was not fatalism but heroism and martial virtue. *Man and Technics* urges Germans to become "active, fighting and charged" and to embrace military and industrial technology and manifest their creative and intellectual capacities in defiance of their impending doom. Spengler argued that the history of human cultures was the manifestation of "technics"—a metaphysical force related to Nietzsche's "will-to-power"—and that cultural deliverance was premised on appreciation of the fact that the "soul of man" was identical with the "essence of technics" as an inexhaustibly creative and agonistic force concerned not with utilitarian progress but with dynamic competition and courageous struggle.

Spengler's continuing hostilities toward National Socialist ideology and his refusal to become a state ideologue ensured that his final days were lonely ones spent in reflection on his status as an unheeded prophet. Spengler's pessimistic vision of Western culture influenced both his contemporaries and subsequent thinkers ranging from Martin Heidegger to the Beat Generation counterculture. Few were persuaded by his "morphology of world-cultures," but the power of Spengler's thought lies not in the clarity of his arguments, nor in the plausibility of his claims, but in his polemical intensity and visionary power.

Ian James Kidd

See also [German Political Thought](#); [Heidegger, Martin](#); [Mill, John Stuart](#); [National Socialism](#); [Nietzsche, Friedrich](#); [Progress](#); [Schmitt, Carl](#); [Technology and Political Thought](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Stalin and Stalinism

Joseph Stalin (1879–1953) became the undisputed leader of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the world Communist movement in 1929, after a series of power struggles in which he triumphed over his comrades, ruling until his death in 1953. During his reign, what had been the former Russian empire (transformed into the USSR) was industrialized and modernized, and the USSR became a major world power. At the same time, Stalin's methods in the 1930s were brutally authoritarian and resulted in the deaths of millions of people. Allied with the United States during World War II, and playing a key role in the destruction of the German military machine in that conflict, the USSR quickly became engaged in a global power struggle (the Cold War) with the United States after their joint victory over the Axis powers. As Communist dictatorships were established in eastern Europe and Asia in the late 1940s and early 1950s, modeled on and influenced by Stalin's regime, many believed (or feared) that what Stalin represented might be the wave of the future. The orientation for the USSR and the world Communist movement that he helped to shape and that he represented has been called "Stalinism."

Born Iosip Djughashvili, son of a Georgian cobbler, and allegedly brutalized by his father, in his youth, he studied at the Tiflis Orthodox Theological Seminary but was expelled in 1899. He was soon active in the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party, a Marxist organization dedicated to advancing the struggles of the working class, advancing a democratic revolution to overthrow the absolute monarchy of tsarism, and eventually

bringing about a working-class revolution to replace capitalism with socialism. By 1903, he was drawn to this party's more militant and centralized faction, the Bolsheviks led by Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. In the revolutionary underground, he assumed the name Stalin ("man of steel"). In 1912, he joined in helping the Bolsheviks establish a separate party that proved capable of winning powerful influence in the rising labor movement.

Stalin's basic understanding of Marxist theory enabled him to produce basic educational and polemical articles and pamphlets—for example, on fundamentals of the Bolsheviks' revolutionary program, on the deficiencies of the Bolsheviks' opponents, on the inadequacies of anarchism, on the question of nationalities, and in favor of Stalin's own perspectives and policies in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the USSR. Among his major works were *Marxism and the National Question* (1913), *The Foundations of Leninism* (1924), *Problems of Leninism* (1926), *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)* (1939), *Marxism and the Problem of Linguistics* (1950), and *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR* (1952). Although millions of people throughout the world came to see Stalin, by the 1930s, as the most authoritative representative of Marxist ideology, many knowledgeable people have argued that his interpretations contain oversimplified, dogmatic, and authoritarian distortions of the far more sophisticated, critical-minded, and radically democratic qualities associated with the actual perspectives of Karl Marx (and even of many Bolsheviks whom Stalin ultimately attacked and destroyed).

Compared with others who by the time of the Russian Revolution became leading Bolsheviks (Lenin, Leon Trotsky, Nikolai Bukharin, Gregory Zinoviev, and Lev Kamenev), Stalin distinguished himself neither as writer nor as theorist or orator. He rose in the ranks of the Bolshevik party through his organizational and administrative skills, also developing a reputation for ruthlessness—all qualities that could be useful in protracted revolutionary struggle. With the working-class overthrow of the Russian monarchy in February–March 1917, followed by Lenin's Bolsheviks leading a socialist revolution in October–November 1917, Stalin assumed an important role in the Bolshevik organization (renamed the Communist Party in 1918) and in

the new Soviet Republic as the commissar of nationalities. In 1919, he became part of Politburo, the central leadership of the Communist Party. Between 1919 and 1922, he accumulated additional positions of authority culminating in the newly created position of Communist Party general secretary (nominally subordinate to the Politburo, but in fact—through subtle manipulations—increasingly able to “guide” its decisions). Stalin’s power was greatly enhanced because, during the brutalizing Russian Civil War of 1918–21, “emergency measures” were established that gave the Communist Party a dictatorship over the country’s political life.

During his last fatal illness in 1922–23, Lenin waged a struggle from his sickbed against Stalin’s authoritarian policies and excessive power—enlisting the support of the brilliant revolutionary Trotsky. But two other key Communist leaders, Zinoviev and Kamenev, initially distrusted Trotsky and preferred a practical Bolshevik stalwart like Stalin. After Lenin’s death, they discovered that Stalin’s control of the party’s and government’s bureaucracy allowed him to sweep aside their perspectives. They joined with Trotsky to struggle against bureaucratic corruption and maintain a revolutionary-internationalist orientation for the Communist International. They were no match for the powerful apparatus under Stalin’s control, and Trotsky was even expelled from the country. Other veteran Bolshevik leaders aligned themselves with Stalin to defeat this opposition, the most prominent being Bukharin—who was soon swept aside for opposing some of Stalin’s most brutal policies.

In 1928–30, Stalin’s “revolution from above,” through the forced collectivization of land and rapid industrialization, employed extreme repression and violence against masses of peasants and workers who resisted the exploitative effects of his new policies. Much of the USSR’s agriculture was wrecked, resulting in famine that cost the lives of perhaps five million people. Although the Communist apparatus under Stalin tightened its control over the intellectual and cultural life of the country, many seasoned Communist Party members nonetheless began to question Stalin’s policies. In several sensational “purge trials” from 1936 through 1939, the Stalin regime claimed that a traitorous conspiracy against the USSR had been hatched by Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, and a majority of those who had led the 1917 revolution. Tens of thousands of

Communists were arrested, in many cases threatened, beaten, or tortured into giving false testimony against themselves and others, and shot. Many more were sent to forced-labor camps. Millions of people were killed.

An immense propaganda campaign proclaimed that socialism was now being established in the USSR and orchestrated a personality cult glorifying Stalin. At the same time, the mobilization of many millions of people animated by the idealistic goals of socialism contributed to impressive economic development. Employment, the necessities of life, and an increasing number of social improvements were guaranteed to ever-broader sectors of the population. Much of the increase in industrial output was made at the expense of quality (half of all tractors produced in the 1930s are said to have broken down), and government figures indicating that overall industrial production increased by about 400 percent between 1928 and 1941 are undoubtedly inflated. Yet the USSR did become a major industrial power in that period.

Stalin's "socialism" had little to do with the genuine economic democracy and expansion of human rights envisioned by the thinkers of classical Marxism. Instead socialism was defined narrowly as state ownership and centralized planning of the economy, with "correct" policies ensured under the direction of the Communist Party, of which Stalin was the undisputed leader. Much was made of the upward mobility that placed many workers or peasants in positions of authority in the governmental and economic institutions. Yet such *former* workers and peasants were actually graduating into the ranks of a privileged elite whose primary loyalty was to the Communist Party leadership headed by comrade Stalin. Associated with massive repression and lethal state terror, Stalin was nonetheless seen by many in the USSR as a heroic and benign leader. Some of the repressions even had a "democratic" aura during the 1930s presumably because they were directed against state and party bureaucrats who had become unresponsive to the needs and desires of the people. There was a mobilization of popular support in workplaces and communities (some of it forced, and some of it sincere) for purge trials and executions.

A central aspect of Stalin's perspective was the notion of building "socialism in one country." Marx and others following in his theoretical

footsteps had seen capitalism as an international system that could only be replaced by socialism on a global scale. More than this, socialism was seen as a radically democratic system that could only be based on relatively high living standards and cultural levels for all people, made possible by high levels of industrial development and productivity that capitalism's Industrial Revolution had created in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Yet Russia had yet to experience such "modernization" that would be the basis for a socialist future.

Lenin and other Bolsheviks (including Stalin himself up to 1924) had insisted that the Russian Revolution of 1917 could initiate the process of world socialist transformation but that socialism could not be established in economically and culturally backward Russia until other countries—particularly industrially more advanced countries—were also able to undergo socialist revolutions and then cooperate in the development of a global socialist economy. This was one of the reasons for the 1919 formation of the Communist International, whose aim was to help build Communist parties in all countries of the world, and to advance revolutions in all lands, thereby making socialism possible. Despite substantial hopes and enthusiasm, and what seemed like almost-revolutions in several countries, by the early 1920s, revolutionary Russia still found itself isolated in a hostile capitalist world.

In 1924, Stalin led a powerful current in the Communist Party bureaucracy in insisting that Russia could achieve socialism independently of the rest of the world. This had three consequences: (1) It encouraged the hollowing out of the definition of socialism to make it consistent with state-sponsored industrialization and "modernization"; (2) the Communist

Party and state bureaucracy overseeing this forced economic development became increasingly authoritarian; and (3) it caused the government of the USSR to seek friendly relations with, not the revolutionary overthrow of, as many capitalist countries as possible.

As a consequence of systematic efforts to establish positive relations with the capitalist world, dynamics were unleashed in the world Communist movement that pulled Communist parties of other countries away from making revolution in their own countries into becoming instruments of the

USSR's foreign policy (to defend the "homeland of socialism"). This became the case particularly after the 1933 rise to power in Germany of Adolf Hitler and his Nazi movement. Worried by Hitler's promise to invade and destroy the USSR, in 1935, Stalin and his comrades launched what they called the "People's Front," designed to establish coalition governments of liberals, socialists, and communists that would establish a reformed capitalism, protect democracy, and maintain an alliance with the USSR against Nazi Germany.

There has been controversy among scholars of the Cold War (1946–90) over how this played out from the end of World War II in 1945 to the time of Stalin's death in 1953. Some see a reversion to the earlier Communist commitment of Lenin to seek the global elimination of capitalism, while others see a more defensive foreign policy basically seeking to buttress the power and "modernization" policies of the Stalinist regime in the USSR and its newly acquired "buffer zone" in eastern Europe.

Some interpretations of Stalinism see it—as Stalin himself insisted—as simply the loyal application of the ideas and policies of Lenin. Such interpretations see all adhering to such ideas and policies as basically "Stalinist" (even if they were sharply critical of Stalin and his brutal methods). Many others have insisted on a dramatic divergence between Stalinism on the one hand and both Lenin and socialism on the other. In many cases, such interpretations have explained Stalinism as a form of authoritarian "modernization," not as a variant of socialism. In some cases, such authoritarianism in the name of "socialism" is essentially what is seen as Stalinism. Others insist on a more complex set of perspectives and policies as essential to what Stalinism means.

The more complex definition of Stalinism might be reduced to five components. One involves the definition of socialism that excludes democracy as an essential element, allowing for a *one-party dictatorship*. A second key component involves the insistence that it is possible to create "*socialism*" in a single country—by which is actually meant some variation of socioeconomic modernization. Third, a *powerful and privileged bureaucratic apparatus dominates both party and state*, generally with a *glorified authoritarian leader* functioning as the keystone of this political

structure. (For some analysts, the existence of extensive material privileges and outright corruption among the powerful bureaucratic layers are key aspects of the crystallization of Stalinism.) A fourth component, inseparable from the previous three, involves some variant of a so-called “*revolution from above*”—often involving populist rhetoric and mass mobilizations—driven by the state and party bureaucracy, on behalf of *modernizing policies but often at the expense of the workers and peasants*, which the party dictatorship claims to represent. Fifth, it is within this framework that some hallmarks of Stalinism—extreme and often *murderous repression, as well as propagandistic regimentation* of education and culture and information, and systematic persecution of dissident thought—can best be understood. Some critics assert that these methods ultimately, and fatally, undermined the system represented by the USSR, which collapsed in 1991.

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See also [Bureaucracy](#); Cold War; [Communism](#), [Varieties of](#); [Democratic Centralism](#); [Dictatorship of the Proletariat](#); [Lenin and Leninism](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Modernization](#); [Planning](#); [Russian Revolution](#), [Political Thought of the](#); [Socialism](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Terrorism](#); [Totalitarianism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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The idea of the state, broadly construed, is the principal subject matter of political thought. In some significant sense, political theories just are theories of—or at least theories about some aspect of—the state.

Disagreements among various theories are largely disagreements about the nature of the state, and the history of political thought is primarily the history of such disagreements.

Terminological Issues

Contemporary discussions use the word “state” in two different ways. On the one hand, commentators frequently speak of, for example, the separation of church and state, or state intervention into the economy, or state-sponsored terrorism, and when they do so they are typically equating “state” with “government.” In effect, the state is understood to be nothing other than the official apparatus of rule. With this definition in mind, political theorists focus on such questions as what constitutes—and what justifies—the “official” status of the ruling entity, how and why do such entities arise, under what circumstances do they sustain themselves, and what is their proper scope of action? The locus classicus here is Max Weber’s famous essay on “Politics as a Vocation,” according to which something qualifies as a state if its “administrative staff successfully upholds a claim on the monopoly of legitimate use of violence in the enforcement of its order” (Weber 1946, 78). Under this definition, the state

essentially is an administrative staff—a government—that claims an exclusive right forcefully to limit the freedom of individuals, perhaps by imprisoning them or imposing fines on them, or perhaps by killing them.

On the other hand, commentators also talk about the Organization of American States, or the city-states of ancient Greece or medieval Italy, or the newly independent states of the postcolonial world. Here the reference is not to a government but to an entire society. Historian Joseph R. Strayer suggests that a society is a state if it features “political units persisting in time, the development of impersonal institutions, agreement on the need for an authority which can give final judgments, and acceptance of the idea that this authority should receive the basic loyalty of its subjects” (Strayer 1970, 10). In this usage, state and government are not at all the same but are different, roughly as the part is different from the whole. Any state must have a government, but it must also be much more than that. Thus, “state” would be synonymous not with “government” but with a range of other venerable terms such as “body politic,” “political society,” “civil society,” “political community,” and “commonwealth.”

These two different uses of the term “state” are profoundly different indeed, and it may be that certain controversies in political thought should be understood as reflecting little more than terminological inconsistency. The most influential and compelling recent historical account of the idea of the state, Quentin Skinner’s *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (1978), argues that the term “state” underwent a decisive change in the sixteenth century when it first acquired its canonical modern meaning as an independent “apparatus” of policy making. According to Skinner, it was with writers such as Jean Bodin, Walter Raleigh, and Thomas Hobbes that the term “state” first became roughly equivalent to “government.” However, the very works that Skinner cites in fact seem highly equivocal precisely on this question. Indeed, it is not difficult to find statements in those works suggesting that “state” refers not to the government but to the entire political society of which, again, the government is merely one part.

In American politics, the term “state,” when used to refer to any or all of the 50 individual states such as New York or Iowa or Oregon, is an anachronism, reflecting the fact that the 13 original colonies did indeed

become, after independence, so many independent political societies united only by a kind of treaty, namely, the Articles of Confederation. Under the U.S. Constitution, which in 1789 replaced the Articles of Confederation, the American states did, and do, seem to retain a certain independent sovereign status. But that status is, at best, severely limited, and may even be entirely dubious. From the perspective of political philosophy, the American states are not really states at all but special administrative subunits of a larger entity—the United States—which is, itself, a state under any plausible definition.

Precursors

Modern conceptions of the state have often been developed in relation or in opposition to premodern theories, and this means that any critical account of modern approaches must pay at least some attention to earlier formulations.

In the second book of his *Republic*, Plato draws a sharp distinction between, on the one hand, a kind of ideal self-regulating community composed of happy, homogeneous, cooperative, and utterly noncompetitive individuals—the so-called “city of sows”—and, on the other hand, a more realistic community composed of people having all the motivations and frailties that we recognize in ourselves and our neighbors and who are, as a result, apt to come into conflict with one another. Plato suggests that only the latter is truly a “political” community—a “polis” or city-state—and in saying this he helps establish a fundamental tenet of all subsequent theories: It is a necessary feature of any state that it has, and operates under the sway of, some kind of authoritative ruling entity that can manage and control the ever-present threat of conflict. Every state, in other words, is governed by some individual or group of individuals—for example, a monarch, an assembly, or a democratic majority—that produces edicts having the force of law. Such edicts must be obeyed on pain of punishment; in all states, the use of force to obtain obedience is, in principle and in certain circumstances, justified. Thus, every state is, to one extent or another, a structure of legitimate coercion, and every state has what later came to be called a “sovereign” entity, that is, an entity whose authority is above all others.

Historically, theories of the state have differed over the sources of the state's legitimacy, the specific purpose that the state is intended to serve, the proper constitution of the ruling entity, and the true nature of that entity's relationship to the body of citizens, whether taken individually or collectively. In these respects, Plato presents what has been considered a hallmark of premodern political thought in the West: The state is natural. This means, among other things, that humans are so constituted by nature to live in states, hence, to be governed by—or in special cases to be themselves part of—a ruling element of some kind, a government. Just as it is in the nature of a plant to grow from its roots in the soil, so is it in the nature of a human to live in a state. On such an account, moreover, the purpose of the state is to embrace and reflect what nature requires; for Plato, this means ensuring that each individual leads the particular kind of life to which he or she is most naturally suited. Some of us are naturally suited to be rulers, others to be warriors, and still others—the large majority—to be basically producers and consumers of goods and services. The state must see to it that each person performs his or her proper task, and this means, among other things, that the ruling entity will be composed of those few individuals who, in virtue of their inherent capacities and dispositions, are best suited to making decisions for the rest. Although Aristotle proposes a different account of how the state should be ruled and organized, he strongly endorses the idea that the state is a natural entity, that humans are constituted by nature to reside in and be governed by states—humans are by nature a political animal—and that the purpose of the state is, again, to ensure that humans live their lives according to the specific laws that nature prescribes.

Modern Theories

Most of the important political theories of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries vigorously reject such a natural law account of the state. Strongly influenced by the mid-seventeenth-century writings of Thomas Hobbes and others, they regard the state as an artificial rather than as a natural entity. It is best understood as a convenient and expedient system of rules and offices that humans have invented to live the kinds of lives that they choose for themselves.

According to a common formulation of this approach, the state has its origins in a social contract. Individual human beings living in a prepolitical circumstance—a so-called condition of mere nature, perhaps real, perhaps hypothetical, that precedes the creation of a state—find their lives inconvenient, unpleasant, and even highly dangerous. Such individuals thus contrive to contract with one another to create a political society and, in the process, to confer on some individual or group of individuals the authority to establish and enforce laws. They create, in other words, a state and, in the process, a government of that state. Here, then, the state is not at all natural but a product of human artifice, and its purpose is not to ensure that people live the lives for which they are naturally best suited but to provide them with the opportunity to live whatever lives they wish. The authority of such a state, and of the government that the state appoints, is rooted not in some kind of transcendent natural law but in the free consent of the governed—sometimes given expressly and sometimes only tacitly through habits or practices of free acquiescence.

Modern theories of this kind take two predominant forms. According to one, exemplified perhaps most importantly in the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the success of such a state absolutely presupposes a citizen body composed of individuals who, as a matter of moral principle, are interested primarily in pursuing the advantage of the community as a whole. In terms of art, these are individuals possessing “civic virtue.” They seek the public interest or, in Rousseau’s term, the “general will,” and this means that decisions of the state are apt indeed to promote the good health of the society. Such an approach is often termed “republican.” The good citizen is thought to pursue, above all, the *res publica*, that is, that thing or things that concern and benefit the state itself.

According to a different, “liberal” model—as presented by, for example, the authors of the *Federalist Papers* and others influenced by John Locke—the success of the state depends not at all on personal virtue but on the effectiveness of laws and institutions in fairly adjudicating disputes among individual citizens, all or most of whom are conceived as rationally self-interested utility maximizers concerned primarily to advance personal or sectarian goals. Here, the state is understood to be an arbiter or umpire adjudicating disputes internal to civil society. Its job is to secure the peace

in a way that is consistent with principles of justice, but also in a way that preserves the freedom of individuals—their rights—to formulate and pursue their own, self-determined life plans. According to such a formulation, the public interest is to be achieved not by a kind of conscious collective commitment to the good health of the community as a whole but through a process of political give-and-take conceived as a matter of competition and negotiation among particular, sectarian groups and individuals governed by fair rules that conduce to equitable outcomes.

Republican and liberal approaches are thus sharply at odds. But they generally agree that the state is a human construct, not a natural entity, and that its goal is not primarily to make people better but to make them free. These claims are questioned by yet another modern approach, associated with writers such as David Hume, Edmund Burke, and others who are sometimes thought of as “conservative.” According to such a perspective, the state is not an intentionally created contrivance. Rather, it represents and is legitimized by those traditions of thought and practice within a society that have proven, over a period of centuries, to be useful and effective through sheer persistence and in virtue of constant, incremental, and often unostensible habits of self-analysis and self-correction. Moreover, there never was and never could have been a social contract in part because individual human beings are not free, at least not in the way that republicans and liberals have supposed. Indeed, the idea of individualism—the notion of individual persons as discrete, autonomous, and independent agents—is suspect. For individual choices and actions actually reflect, and cannot but reflect, established and traditional cultural mores or customs. We are products of our history and our circumstance, and those self-same mores and customs provide, as well, the foundations of the legitimate, authoritative state and determine how that state should behave.

These various, seemingly antithetical perspectives are brought together in a grand synthesis proposed by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. According to his theory of “objective spirit”—outlined most fully in the *Philosophy of Right*—Hegel argues that the idea of the state, which he terms the “rational state,” embodies without contradiction both the primacy of the interests of the state itself and the genuine liberty of the individual. On the one hand, the laws, institutions, and habits of the state, properly understood, reflect

the cumulative discoveries of human reason as it develops in history. Just as, say, the axioms and theorems of mathematics unfold over time through a long and often tortuous process of conjecture, consolidation, criticism, and reanalysis leading to some new and better conjecture, so does our understanding of the state, and the actual political institutions reflecting that understanding deepen and mature through a similarly difficult, long-term, and ongoing historical process of claim, counterclaim, and reconciliation resulting in a new and better claim. The final outcome is, in principle, a conception and realization of the state that fully reflects the demands of rational thinking. But individual human beings are themselves also understood primarily to be creatures of rational thought. They are most fully human when their actions reflect not the physical or bodily desires of their animal side but the rationally discoverable principles of their intellectual or mental (in Hegel's word *geistig*) side. These ideas on which the rational state is based are the ideas that individual humans at once discover and embrace, and that help the individual realize his or her full potential. The individual who obeys the laws of the state, as embodiments of a larger rational principle, is thus, at the same time, obeying him- or herself as a creature and vehicle of that very principle; and Hegel, following the enormously influential ethical theory of Immanuel Kant, understands such self-obedience to be precisely a definition of freedom.

In pursuing these ideas, Hegel attempts to show how the rational state embodies and subsumes liberal notions of individualism and self-interestedness involving property rights, contractual obligations, and attachments to groups representing competing sectarian claims; republican notions of virtue involving self-assumed obligations based on principle rather than on inclination; and traditional notions of attachment to family and the historical community. These are brought together in a single organic structure. The rational state is like a body—it is a body politic—in which the various diverse parts fit together as a single, unified, functionally differentiated yet fully integrated entity. Such an organicist conception is an old notion, long-predating Hegel, but Hegel presents it with unusual rigor and with the distinctly modern twist that the individuals who are a part of the organism are, for that reason, free.

The Hegelian synthesis of the modern theory of the state was sharply criticized by Karl Marx. According to Marx, Hegel profoundly misunderstands the relationship between the government of a state and all of the other institutions and practices of civil society. In actuality, according to Marx, the state is and can only be a product of the underlying economic structure of society. That structure is always characterized by sharp and deep distinctions between those individuals and institutions who effectively own the means of production—raw materials, machinery, factories, transportation equipment, and the like—and those who do not, most of whom are laborers. For Marx, the authoritative decision-making apparatus of any state is controlled by the former. Laws and policies do not simply reflect the direct interests of the so-called ruling class; they are by definition tools that the ruling class uses to maintain its power. On the one hand, Marxist criticism provides perhaps the most notable example of what happens when we encounter the kinds of terminological inconsistencies described above. For it seems that Marx uses the term “state” to refer to the government, while Hegel uses it when speaking of an entire political society; and to the degree that this is true, Marx’s criticism arguably ignores the deep organicism of Hegel’s account. On the other hand, Marx’s notion of a truly just society, namely, communism, does indeed propose the dissolution of all coercive mechanisms of rule. Specifically, communist society will be a classless society and will, as such, have no need at all for the instrumentalities of law and authority. The communist revolution, when successful, will thus promote the “withering away of the state,” resulting in a nonpolitical society based on free cooperation rather than on coercion, perhaps a modern-day version of Plato’s “city of sows.”

Contemporary Themes

The wide influence—both direct and indirect—of Marxism in twentieth-century social and political thought has promoted a certain tendency to think of the instrumentalities of the state as somehow epiphenomenal manifestations of deeper, more fundamental social structures, economic and otherwise. Some theorists, however, have rebelled against this, and the postwar period has seen an increasing focus on the independent influence of governmental entities in shaping social practice. For example, the important neo-Marxist writings of Louis Althusser suggest that modern political

regimes in developed societies are best understood less as tools of specific commercial and industrial interests than as bulwarks of the larger capitalist system per se. Relatedly, more mainstream theorists have argued for “bringing the state back” when analyzing the causes of social policy and social change. Still others have explored the idea of political society as a locus of nationalist sentiment in which the state functions as a kind of “imagined community.”

Increasingly, however, even the relevance of the idea of the state—whether understood as an entire political society or as the government of such a society—has come under question. For some contemporary theorists, the forces of globalization have undermined the authority, identity, and character of the state. The permeability of borders, the fact that profound social problems such as environmental degradation do not recognize political boundaries, the astonishing developments in transportation and communications technology that have shrunk the world and weakened national identities, and the ever increasing internationalization of commercial enterprises—all of this has served to suggest that the focus of a meaningful political theory should be either on various kinds of international “regimes” such as the European Union and the International Monetary Fund or on substate entities such as communities, militias, local social movements, traditional tribal entities, commercial enterprises, and the like.

Nevertheless, some theorists have sought to deepen and refine our understanding of the idea of the state itself as an element in our shared conceptual apparatus. In part, this has involved a certain development and updating of earlier controversies between liberals and republicans. John Rawls, for example, has conceptualized the liberal state as a system of mutual toleration based on reasonable rules that allow individuals and groups having widely divergent beliefs to live together peacefully and productively. For Hannah Arendt, on the other hand, political society fundamentally provides a public space in which human beings can jointly discuss and act on ideals that describe the good of the entire community.

Other writers, however, worry that all of these debates are unhelpful and even unintelligible without a clear sense of the idea of the state itself. What

is it that makes a state—a city-state, a nation-state, a world state—a state? According to one account, the idea of the state is that the state is essentially an idea. Specifically, the state reflects and embodies the collective, shared judgments of a society about how things in the world really are. It is a systematic structure of thought on the basis of which the individuals of a society seek jointly to control their lives and their interactions. Indeed, from such a perspective, the state is neither more nor less than the authoritative manifestation of a specific way of life, reflecting the full gamut of claims of which a particular society is composed. As long as humans live in societies, it is hard to imagine that the state, understood along these lines, could ever be less than deeply and profoundly relevant.

Peter J. Steinberger

See also [Althusser, Louis](#); [Arendt, Hannah](#); [Authority](#); [Civil Society](#); [Conservatism](#); [Constitutionalism](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Dictatorship of the Proletariat](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Federalism](#); [General Will](#); [Globalization](#); [Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich](#); [Humanitarian Intervention](#); [Kant, Immanuel](#); [Law and Political Thought](#); [Legitimacy](#); [Liberalism](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Locke, John](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Nationalism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Power](#); [Rule of Law](#); [Separation of Powers](#); [Sovereignty](#); [State](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Stephen J. Finn Stephen J. Finn

State of Nature

State of nature

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State of Nature

The “state of nature” refers to a hypothetical state of humankind, before the formation of the civil state, lacking any overarching power to establish and enforce laws that keep people in check. Political philosophers use the state of nature as a conceptual tool to justify and express their beliefs about the origin, legitimacy, and extent of governmental power. Although the state of nature is usually considered hypothetically, some philosophers, such as Thomas Hobbes, believed the state of nature could exist in a limited sense in the real world as, for example, between individuals shipwrecked on an island or after the revolutionary overthrow of a government.

One of the first philosophers to use the notion of a natural state prior to the formation of the political state in the context of political philosophy was Plato. Glaucon, one of the speakers in Plato’s dialogue *The Republic*, claims that humans are naturally inclined to act unjustly when it is to their advantage. However, according to Glaucon, inasmuch as most individuals are not strong enough to act unjustly and get away with it, so laws are created to protect these weaker individuals from the stronger ones who would be able to do as they wished. Although Glaucon does not use the term “state of nature,” he implies there is a prepolitical state prior to the agreement to establish laws (an agreement that later philosophers refer to as a “social contract”).

The state of nature became a central concept of political philosophy during the modern period, especially in the thought of two seventeenth-century

British philosophers, Thomas Hobbes and John Locke. Although other modern philosophers, such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau and David Hume, used the concept of the state of nature in their writings, Hobbes and Locke prepared the foundation for its use in political philosophy. Hobbes used the state of nature to defend political absolutism, a view that grants absolute power to a state sovereign in all matters political, ethical, and religious. For Hobbes, the state of nature is a state of war in which all people are natural enemies to one other and, therefore, where humans are in a state of constant fear and the conditions of life are “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.” Hobbes’s pessimistic view of the natural state of humankind follows from his view that humans are egoistic individuals driven to satisfy their own personal interests. Furthermore, humans are free in a state of nature to do whatever is conducive to their own pleasure and self-preservation. It is easy to see why the state of nature is one of conflict for Hobbes. Although Hobbes believes humans are naturally egoistic, he also considers them to be rational, although imperfectly so. Guided by natural reason, individuals in a state of nature discover “laws of nature” that, if followed, help them achieve their own good. As it turns out, the laws of nature reveal that the best way to satisfy one’s own interests in a state of nature is to seek peace with others. Such peace is accomplished when individuals agree, through a social contract, to establish an absolute common power to establish and enforce laws.

John Locke, by contrast, used the state of nature to justify limited monarchy and even, potentially, a parliamentary republic. As did Hobbes, Locke believed that the state of nature was ruled by a “law of nature” discoverable by reason. For Locke, however, the law of nature is not simply a means for individuals to attain their own interests, but it is a moral law according to which no person should deprive others of their life, health, liberty, or property. Of course, if all individuals could live by this law, the state of nature would be peaceful. However, humans are not always able to interpret and judge the natural law correctly since they may often be biased by natural emotions. Because of these “inconveniences” of the state of nature, it becomes necessary to establish a government that can establish and enforce laws but that is also accountable to the citizenry. Unlike Hobbes, Locke believed that leaders’ power should be limited because absolute power in the hands of one individual, or a small group of individuals, is too

dangerous. Among eighteenth-century writers who used the concept, Jean-Jacques Rousseau developed a secularized variation of the Biblical account of the Creation and Fall of humankind in his *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* (1755). Here the development of metallurgy and the division of labor and property in particular were held responsible for humankind's lapse from a more primitive but authentic form of sociability and greater personal independence. Variations on this theme were not uncommon in nineteenth-century socialism. At some points, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels and various of their followers also sought to locate the origins of certain superior forms of marriage and property holding in primitive societies, while holding that these might necessarily be modified in the ideal communist future. Some anarchists did the same, and utopian writers have often referred to some variant on "natural society" as an ideal golden age akin to that described by ancient Greek and Roman writers. Speculation as to the original condition of humanity now shifted from a largely philosophical starting point to an anthropological one. As a means of approaching the question of original human equality, the use of the device of the state of nature also gave way in this period to other forms of argument, chiefly political and economic and often rights-based.

In the twentieth century, John Rawls used a concept he called the "original position" to defend a theory of justice that could provide foundational principles for the creation of a just society. The "original position" is a more abstract version of the state of nature. In the original position, humans are imagined to be behind a "veil of ignorance," completely unaware of their own personal characteristics such as race, age, religion, social class, intelligence, and even their own personal values. In such a state, Rawls claims, rational individuals would choose egalitarian principles of justice that would ensure the protection of individual rights and the fair distribution of social benefits.

Stephen J. Finn

See also [Anarchism](#); [Contract Theory](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Engels, Frederick](#); [Equality and Egalitarianism](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Locke, John](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Natural Law](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political](#)

[Thought](#); [Property](#), [Theories of](#); [Rawls, John](#); [Rousseau, Jean-Jacques](#); [Scottish Enlightenment](#); [Socialism](#); [Utopianism](#)

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David Leopold David Leopold

Stirner, Max

Stirner, Max

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Stirner, Max

Max Stirner (1806–56) is best known as the author of *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* (usually translated as *The Ego and Its Own*), first published in Germany in 1844. His rejection of conventional forms of expression and modes of argument make this a difficult text to read. Nevertheless, the book has had some significant historical impact: It provided a crucial impetus to the dissolution of the Hegelian left as a coherent ideological movement; it played an important role in Karl Marx's intellectual evolution; and it came to be seen as an influential early statement of individualist anarchism.

Stirner was born Johann Caspar Schmidt in Bayreuth, Bavaria. He passed through university without distinction, subsequently becoming a teacher at a respectable private girls' school in Berlin. He became involved with "the free" (a left Hegelian group associated with Bruno and Edgar Bauer) and resigned from his teaching post shortly before the publication of *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*. The book provoked fierce critical reaction from Hegelian contemporaries but achieved little popular success. Occasional journalism, some translation work, and his second wife's small inheritance (she left him in 1846) did not avert two spells in a debtors' prison. His increasingly indigent and solitary life ended in June 1856 when, after an insect bite on the neck, Stirner contracted a fever and died.

Der Einzige und sein Eigentum resists easy summary. The only restriction on uses of language and means of argument that Stirner recognized was that they should serve our ends. His enthusiasm for aphorism, metaphor,

neologism, paronomasia, and the juxtaposition of words with formal similarities or related meanings makes for some striking prose but cannot be said to aid the reader interested in identifying Stirner's views with precision.

A tripartite model of human development constitutes one recurring motif in the book. Stirner describes a dialectical process whereby an initial stage of "realism" (in which individuals are dominated by things) is replaced by a stage of "idealism" (in which individuals are dominated by ideas), which is itself replaced by a final stage of "egoism" (in which individuals escape domination by dealing with things and ideas as they wish, setting their personal satisfaction above all else). Stirner uses this structure to elaborate individual biography (where the three stages correspond to childhood, youth, and adulthood, respectively) and collective human history (where the three stages correspond to ancient, Christian, and future epochs, respectively).

Stirner diagnoses the contemporary world (part of the historical stage of "idealism") as failing to escape precisely what it claims to have outgrown, namely, religious ways of thinking. In this context, he is especially keen to reject the consensus that Ludwig Feuerbach, the leading figure of the Hegelian left, had completed the critique of religion. Stirner insists that Feuerbach's anthropological reduction of religion had not revealed human nature as it actually was but deified an abstract and prescriptive account of what it would be to be human. In this way, Feuerbach is said to have left the essential core of religion—the positing of an "essence over me"—intact.

In contrast, the egoistic future would rehabilitate the concrete and unique individual to whom this "foolish mania to be something else" means nothing. The egoist values what Stirner calls "ownness [*Eigenheit*]" above all else. "Ownness" is perhaps best understood as a form of individual autonomy that is violated by any desire or action that involves waiving or suspending our own judgment. As a result, it conflicts with all conceptions of obligation or duty, even self-assumed obligations such as those generated by promises. Both morality (which, by definition, posits duties on the individual) and the state (which cannot survive the rejection of any obligation to obey the law) are early victims of Stirnerian egoism. More

positively, Stirner sought to promote the “union of egoists” as a form of association that does not violate “ownness.” This union is a constantly shifting alliance in which individuals can unite without loss of sovereignty. It forms a purely instrumental combination whose good is the advantages that individuals derive from the pursuit of their own interests—there are no final ends here and the association is not valued in itself.

David Leopold

See also [Anarchism](#); [German Political Thought](#); [Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich](#); [Hegelianism](#); [Human Nature, Theories of](#); [Individualism](#); [Libertarianism](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Nietzsche, Friedrich](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [State, Theories of](#)

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Timothy Burns Timothy Burns

Strauss, Leo

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Strauss, Leo

Leo Strauss (1899–1973) was a German-born, Jewish American political philosopher who revived the study of political philosophy in the twentieth century. His complex philosophical reflections exercise a quietly growing, deep influence in America, Europe, and Asia.

Strauss was born in the rural town of Kirchhain in Hesse-Nassau, Prussia, on September 20, 1899, to Hugo and Jenny David Strauss. He attended Kirchhain's *Volksschule* and the *Rektoratsschule* before enrolling, in 1912, at the *Gymnasium Philippinum* in Marburg, graduating in 1917. The adolescent Strauss was immersed in Hermann Cohen's neo-Kantianism, the most progressive German-Jewish thinking. "Cohen," Strauss states, "was the center of attraction for philosophically minded Jews who were devoted to Judaism" (Strauss 1972, 267). After serving in the German army for a year and a half, Strauss began attending the University at Marburg, where he met Hans-Georg Gadamer and Jacob Klein. In 1921, he went to Hamburg, where he wrote his doctoral thesis under Ernst Cassirer. In 1922, Strauss went to the University of Freiburg-im-Breisgau for a postdoctoral year to see and hear Edmund Husserl, and also attended lecture courses given by Martin Heidegger. He participated in Franz Rosenzweig's *Freies Jüdisches Lehrhaus* in Frankfurt-am-Main and published articles in *Der Jude* and the *Jüdische Rundschau*. One of these articles, on Cohen's analysis of Baruch Spinoza, brought Strauss to the attention of Julius Guttmann, who in 1925 offered him a position researching Jewish philosophy at the *Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* in Berlin.

There Strauss wrote his first book, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion as the Foundation of his Science of the Bible, Investigations into Spinoza's Theologico-Political Treatise* (published in 1930), and he was part of the editorial team for the jubilee edition of Moses Mendelssohn's writings. The work introduced him to various German Jewish intellectuals, such as Hannah Arendt and Walter Benjamin. Others whom he met at the time and with whom he later carried on vigorous epistolary exchanges were Karl Löwith, Gerhard Krüger, Gershom Scholem, Hans Jonas, Emil Fackenheim, and Paul Kraus—who married Strauss's sister Bettina. Many of these exchanges are published in the *Gesammelte Schriften* (Collected Writings) edited by Heinrich Meier (1966). Strauss was also engaged in a critical discourse with Carl Schmitt, who was instrumental in Strauss's receiving a Rockefeller Fellowship, through which he was able to leave Germany before the ascent of Nazism.

In 1932, he left for Paris. He returned to Germany only once, for a few days in 1954. He had accepted an invitation to return in 1965 to accept an honorary degree from, and teach for a semester at, the University of Hamburg, arrangements having been made by Wilhelm Hennis, Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker, and Wolfgang Ieland. Yet poor health made the trip to Germany impossible (see Meier 1966, Vol. 3, xxv and 690–91). In Paris he married Miriam Bernsohn, a widow with a young son, Thomas, whom he adopted. He later adopted Bettina's daughter, Jenny, after the deaths of Bettina and Paul Kraus. In Paris, Strauss became friends with the Marxist Hegelian Alexandre Kojève and was on friendly terms with Raymond Aron and Alexandre Koyré. He moved to England in 1934, and in 1935, he relocated to Cambridge, where he was associated with the Sidney Sussex College, University of Cambridge. He received access to Thomas Hobbes's early papers at Devonshire, and he met R. H. Tawney, with whom he became a close friend, and Ernest Barker. He immigrated to New York in 1937, and after a research fellowship at Columbia University, he was a visiting lecturer at Hamilton College, Union College, Middlebury College, Amherst College, Wesleyan University, and the New School for Social Research. In 1949, he joined the political science faculty at the University of Chicago, where he was named Robert Maynard Hutchins Distinguished Service Professor in 1959, teaching there until 1969. (He took a year's absence to teach at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in

1954–55.) He then spent a year at Claremont Men's College and three years at St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland. He died in 1973, having published 15 books and numerous articles in scholarly journals.

Most of Strauss's writings are careful explications of works by political philosophers that make considerable demands on the mind and heart of the reader. His later writings in particular are written in a dense style that has the appearance of offering no more than summaries of the argument of texts; they have been aptly described as a gift to those of his students who have succeeded in understanding his earlier work and the work of political philosophers taken up in them. Nonetheless, five clear themes are discernible in his writings: the theological-political problem, esoteric writing, the quarrel between the ancients and the moderns, historicism, and the crisis of our time.

The Theological-Political Problem

Strauss followed Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in seeing “the struggle between belief and unbelief,” or the question of the source of the obligations by which we guide our lives, as “the deepest theme of all world and human history” (Strauss [1934] 2011, 23). As a morally serious young man, he was gripped by the apparently irreconcilable conflict between nobility-inducing faith, on the one hand, and the claims of science, on the other, which he referred to as “the theological-political predicament.” In a manner helpful to others, he presented (in his 1965 Preface to *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*) the arguments by which he wrested himself free from modern presuppositions and the remnants of the biblical and classical tradition that had been transformed by those presuppositions, so that the issue of faith versus reason could present itself in full clarity. He made clear that he was assisted in this effort by the work of Heidegger.

Strauss stressed that his writings were appearing at a time when the possibility of philosophy, understood as reason's search for enduring truth, so far from being taken for granted, had been radically called into question by the works of Friedrich Nietzsche and Heidegger. Partly as a result of that questioning, the West had come to be characterized by a protracted collapse of confidence in the possibility of discovering, through reason, a genuine

universal understanding of the world, one by which we can and should take our bearings. Through his life's work as a teacher and a scholar, Strauss faced and led others to face that situation squarely, and he guided the way both to a recovery of the original ground for the rational life in Socratic political philosophy and to a respectful, painstakingly careful account of the developments in modern political philosophy. Attempting to learn something of importance from earlier thinkers, he emphasized, and not merely *about* them, "places an obligation on the interpreter to pay the most careful attention not to interject into [a thinker's] teaching opinions that prevail or threaten to prevail today" (Strauss [1934] 2011, 123).

Ancients

After his early work on Spinoza, Strauss was led, through a study of Moses Maimonides and his predecessors among the Islamic *falasifa*, to the works of Plato. He came to realize that a crisis of reason similar to the one we are witnessing in our time had occurred at the time of Socrates, who became aware that permanent limits to what is genuinely knowable by science or philosophy opened up a remarkable possibility: that the world, far from having the kind of intelligible necessities that reason seeks to uncover in its search for causes, could instead—as adherents of divine revelation had always claimed—be the work of mysterious, creative gods or god, whose powers would render reason's search for causes futile and possibly fatal. Socrates's grasp of this problem, Strauss realized, led him to a "second sailing," that is, to an unprecedented attempt to ground the life of reason not (as the pre-Socratics had attempted) through science itself but instead by means of a preliminary investigation of political-moral questions. It led him, that is, to found political philosophy as a "preliminary" to philosophy proper. The Socratics held to this line of thinking.

Strauss carefully and prudently explained how premodern, Socratic political philosophy, that is, the dialectical investigation of justice and of law that one finds in the Platonic dialogues and in the works of later thinkers who read them carefully, provides a sufficient answer to the question of how one can know that the life led according to reason is the right life for a human being. By his attention to this central question, Strauss helped his readers to undertake the study of political philosophy neither as an antiquarian venture

nor with a politicized spirit but instead as an activity vital to their own lives and the lives of those with whom they live. At the same time, he neither allowed his readers to overlook the peculiar difficulties attending the recovery of reason in our age nor obscured the profoundly agonizing self-transformation that is required of students of Socratic philosophy in any age. And these in turn made him keenly aware of the measures taken by political philosophers to write with a view to the various needs and capacities of their many readers, or with what he called “esoteric writing.”

In presenting a dialectical examination of the problem of justice as the Socratic answer to the theologico-political problem, Strauss emphasized that such dialectic, far from being philosophical or scientific, proceeds on the basis of premises agreed to by the (potential) believer; it proceeds from the given, “prescientific” world of “common sense,” that is, on the basis of premises shared by the nonphilosophic. The examination discloses that humans are animated by a deep and passionate “erotic” longing for self-transcending union with the eternal or divine, over and against awareness of their own mortality, a longing that may be hidden, repressed, or diverted into worldly addictions like monetary acquisition, but it is at work everywhere in political action. But this longing proves to call forth purification by thought since humans also desire escape from delusion. In the best cases, Socratic dialectic purges this longing and with it both political ambition and hope for any possible union with the divine. The conversions of a few erotic potential statesmen to the philosophic life thus give decisive evidence that the philosopher’s own liberation is not idiosyncratic. Dialectic therefore provides the ground of philosophy or science simply, and it was understood to be adequate by later thinkers like Maimonides, al-Farabi, and Marsilius of Padua (who understood the Socratic answer to encompass the most elementary premises of the Bible). But the dialectical purging proves to be healthy for but a few strong souls, and this is the deepest cause of esoteric writing, the “benevolent deception” practiced by Socratics, who grasp the sources of the most firmly rooted moral prejudices that pervade every time and who accommodate their writing to them. The practice of Socratic political philosophy does not, then, according to Strauss, entail *any* promise of a rational politics or morality; it instead includes only a kind of writing that makes contributions

to the edification of the reigning civic virtues, while leading a few morally serious readers toward the philosophic life.

Moderns

Equipped with this recovery of the intention of classical political philosophy, and having undergone the “change of orientation” that it entailed, Strauss returned to his study of the origins of modern political philosophy in the work of Hobbes, reopening the “quarrel of the ancients and the moderns,” which had been temporarily closed by the apparent victory of the moderns. His intention in returning to Hobbes was twofold: to understand modern thought radically and to clear away later developments that had hidden the fundamental questions. Strauss argued that Hobbes, unlike his successors, addressed squarely the question of the right way of life, but that Hobbes did so while “taking for granted” the tradition and, hence, the possibility and necessity of political philosophy, or that he did so with a “neglect” of the purport of classical political philosophy. Hobbes misunderstood that intention to be the attempt to establish the right social order. He and his successors, Strauss argued, were thereby led to put the establishment of that order into the service of the grounding of science. For Hobbes, Strauss claimed, was guided in his thought by an effort to overcome “the cavils of the skeptics”—challenges posed by those who, like John Calvin or the *mutakallimûn*, claimed that the world is fundamentally unintelligible because it is at every moment the work of a mysterious, creative God. Hobbes granted that unintelligibility and proposed against it a phenomenological-positivist science (positing laws made by the human mind and remaking the world on their basis). Hobbes’s new activist or “effective” political science was to be the means to make this science secure, by its disenchantment of the world through a “reorientation” of humanity, away from faith in god or gods and toward “civilization.” Strauss noted that Hobbes and his successors, rather than taking seriously what is disclosed in speech about the good and bad, just and unjust, reconceived political phenomena on the basis of the imposition of an abstract theory, turning away from the speech of statesmen as something infected with imaginative superstition or fanaticism and obstructing the achievement of this-worldly pleasures.

To achieve their end, the moderns laid out new theoretical principles of social life: “power,” rather than the good as the end of striving; natural rights, or selfish but justified claims, rather than natural or divine obligations; a state of nature rather than a perfect beginning; natural laws as merely human rules showing the best means to peace and comfortable living; and a social contract of individuals to secure their rights. The aim of the liberal regimes founded on these new principles was, Strauss argued, to de-politicize human life, an aim that required a rejection of the Socratic claim that humans have an erotic longing for eternity. That longing was seen by the moderns as merely a distorted form of desire for the goods of this world, with which—thanks to the conquest of nature by the new natural science—humans could be made content. The new, liberal regimes were designed to provide an enlightenment and a liberation from ignorance, superstition, and prejudice, both through the scientific conquest of nature and through the acceptance of the new, “rational” understanding of justice (natural rights) rather than the categorical duties to which an allegedly divine law summons them. The disenchantment of the world through the success of the new political science was, then, a key part of attaining the desired end: a world in which science had succeeded at last in grounding itself, that is, met the challenge posed to it by divine revelation.

The Modern Failure, Historicism, and “The Crisis of Our Time”

Having come to understand early modern political philosophy as aiming to answer to the theologico-political problem in this manner, Strauss came to see the West’s eventual loss of faith in reason as having been an incipient problem from the beginning of modernity, with each successive attempt to correct for it, or “wave,” deepening the crisis. Strauss saw “liberal relativism,” the relativism “according to which the one thing needful is respect for diversity or individuality,” as growing out of the natural right tradition of tolerance, which was explicitly based on Hobbes’s denial that there can be anything intrinsically right or good. That kind of individualism, which sought to obviate the need for any religious or transcendent meaning, failed to answer what proved to be an enduring human longing for such meaning; it at least suggested a fundamental meaninglessness or

whimsicalness to self-sacrificial just or noble action and, hence, could not be sustained. Its rejection was perceived and anticipated by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whose call to build a high democratic culture of human-made humanity, based on the “general will” of peoples, over and against early modern rationalism, was taken up in earnest by the German Idealists. Hence, the first form that the moral rejection of early modern rationalism took, Strauss found, was “historicism,” the belief that the human mind is decisively and inescapably formed by the time and place in which we find ourselves. The “historical school” offered meaningfulness in the customs and laws that had grown up in the course of a people’s history, embodied in a general will, and—to ensure that that will was not arbitrary or erroneous—understood as one particular expression of an evolving human consciousness, one “progressing” toward full rational self-consciousness. But this too failed to satisfy morally serious human beings because of its fundamentally secular or this-worldly orientation. The problem was illustrated by Strauss with the example of early, strictly political Zionism, which had to transform itself into “cultural” Zionism if it was to capture the minds and hearts of those who understood themselves to be part of a noble tradition of suffering. But that transformation meant that what had been understood by the tradition as the revealed word of God would instead be understood as a product of the human mind. It thus clouded the central issue of the right way of life—of faith or reason—and failed to satisfy the longing for transcendence of orthodox believers.

Although this attempt of the historical school failed, the belief that history added a dynamic dimension to human existence nonetheless persisted, and it was radicalized in the thought of Nietzsche, who proclaimed the need for a departure from the horizon of Western rationalism that threatened to produce satisfied “last men,” and Heidegger, whose doctrines Strauss calls “radical historicism” or “Heideggerian existentialism.”

Strauss found, through examination of Nietzsche’s articulation of the West’s crisis, that at the bottom of the modern political-philosophic attempt to ground philosophy over and against the claims of revelation was intellectual probity—or the ability to face up to hard truths—which he understood as a great, and always necessary, but fundamentally insufficient, virtue. He saw this virtue reaching its fullest form in Heidegger’s apparently atheistic

analysis, in *Being and Time*, of the call of conscience as the call of Care. But he saw probity's insufficiency showing itself in, among other things, the fact that death becomes Heidegger's new god, summoning humans to serious, stubbornly resolute, elevated action. And although Strauss was explicitly indebted to Heidegger for his understanding of the "neglect," by early moderns, of fundamental questions that Heidegger's "destruction of the tradition" had first made possible, he nonetheless found Heidegger's historicism to have its own unexamined or taken-for-granted character. For Heidegger's destruction of the tradition was carried out without awareness of the art of esoteric writing that had been practiced, in various forms and for various reasons, by thinkers within the tradition.

The rich unfolding of modernity thus seemed to Strauss to represent not only a neglect of, but also a progressive estrangement from, erotic human nature as disclosed by Socratic dialectics. He accordingly characterized the result as an "estrangement from man's deepest desire and therewith from the primary issues" and called this the "price which modern man had to pay" for attempting to conquer nature (1959, 55). As a result of the failure of modernity, moreover, modern science and philosophy lost sight of what is required to establish the ground of the rational life.

Strauss's "Politics"

In the light of Strauss's account of the respective answers to the theologico-political problem, and especially his understanding of the magnificent failure of the modern attempt, in which philosophers became active proponents of political change, he was inclined to judge classical political science and practice as superior to modern political science in most respects. Classical philosophers' nobler accounts of politics, Strauss found, deliberately sought to do justice to the phenomena of political life, as actually experienced and viewed by the pre-philosophic, engaged citizen. Modern political philosophy, by contrast, had resulted in a relativist social and political science that is increasingly unable to recognize either tyranny or human nobility. Although Strauss's writings manifest a reluctance to offer theoretical guidance to contemporary statesmen, he did stress that our world has been transformed in ways that adversely affect the souls of both citizens and potential philosophers, and he did not refrain from offering an

(unsettling) account of our contemporary situation, warning against two possible directions of liberal democracy, the regime that he found the best of the available alternatives in the modern world.

The first direction is a cosmopolitanism that it is rooted in the belief that human life as such is an absolute good, a cosmopolitanism that embraces and even promotes a peculiar humanitarianism that goes hand-in-hand with a ruling concern with pleasure and entertainment and unwillingness to devote one's life to high ends. Cosmopolitanism necessarily leaves little room for reverence, which is primarily for one's particularistic heritage or for tradition. Since Strauss regarded reverence as the matrix of human nobility, he saw this tendency as problematic for liberal democracy, which becomes ever more permissive and individualistic, tending toward a leveling moralism and an overemphasis on the virtues of sociability at the expense of more difficult virtues. Following Max Weber, he found modern democracy to foster "mass culture," one "which can be appropriated by the meanest capacities without any intellectual and moral effort whatsoever" (Strauss 1968, 5), producing a decay of the spirit, of taste, and of the mind. Liberal republican energy and stability are necessarily threatened by this dwindling of spiritual resources and cultural shallowness.

Liberal democracy is likewise threatened by the growing void left by the recognition of this spiritual impoverishment. For such impoverishment cannot take place without an eventual terrible awareness of it, and it would not be unreasonable to expect unforeseeable forms of longing and rebellion against the political order that seems to be causing a diminution of natural human aspirations. The yearning for transcendent purpose may result in manifestations of preliberal religiosity or various sorts of desperate nihilisms that aim to destroy modernity, in perverted and fanatic expressions of the natural and inevitable civic concern for the sacred and willingness to fight on its behalf. Even within the confines of liberal democracy, Strauss suggested, that concern had already begun to produce an incoherence in liberal thinkers, like Isaiah Berlin, who turn away from reason and toward Heideggerian resolute or deadly serious decision. Since reason cannot supply the transmodern norms that would temper modern liberal rationalism and political universalism in the way its citizens suspect it needs to be, liberals may attempt to abandon reason and stifle self-critical

thinking. Modernity's disenchantment of the world eventually drives even the nonbelieving morally serious person, in other words, to a form of misology, or to what Strauss, citing the experience of Europe in the 1930s and 1940s, called "fanatical obscurantism," that is, a desperate, moralistic flight from what reason seems to reveal about the apparent groundlessness of our moral and civic being.

It is perhaps for this reason that Strauss, in the introduction to his most widely read work, *Natural Right and History*, sternly warns those looking to find a basis for natural right not to be led by the spirit of fanatical obscurantism that characterized their foes. He also makes abundantly clear that political life does not admit of the radical consistency that characterizes all genuine thinking. Not all of his students have taken these warnings to heart. He can be said to have fostered an understanding of the tendencies and noblest aspirations of liberal democratic regimes and moderation of their less healthy tendencies, in the service of elevation of purpose. Strauss's perhaps most enduring legacy in the study of American liberal democracy is manifest in the work of Herbert Storing and his students.

Timothy Burns

See also [Arendt, Hannah](#); [Cosmopolitanism](#); [Heidegger](#); [Martin](#); [Historicism](#); [Liberalism](#); [Mass Society](#); [Natural Law](#); [Nietzsche, Friedrich](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Rousseau, Jean-Jacques](#); [Schmitt, Carl](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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June Purvis June Purvis

Suffragettes, Political Thought of the

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The terms *suffragette* and *suffragist* are often used interchangeably to describe those who campaigned for women's suffrage. However, it is important to differentiate between the two. "Suffragette" is usually applied to those women who adopted "militant" tactics to achieve their aims and "suffragist" to those women and men who favored constitutional or legal methods. The campaigns for women's enfranchisement that began in the nineteenth century and that progress, even into the twentieth century, were patchy. For example, in 1893, New Zealand became the first nation-state in the world to give women the franchise when it allowed all of its female citizens to vote in parliamentary elections, a democratic right that was extended to all women in Finland in 1906.

But it was not until 1920 in the United States, and 1928 in Britain, that women were granted full voting rights on equal terms with men. Yet despite the range and variety of this worldwide activity, the term *suffragette* is particularly applied to those women who were members of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), founded by Emmeline Pankhurst on October 10, 1903, to campaign for the parliamentary vote for women in Edwardian Britain. At this time in Britain, about 59 percent of adult males could vote, based on the ownership of property or occupation of property of a minimum value, but all women remained voteless, irrespective of these property qualifications. It was the ending of this sex discrimination that Emmeline Pankhurst and her eldest daughter Christabel, the chief organizer of the WSPU, sought to break as for 11 years, from 1903 until the outbreak

of World War I in August 1914, they led the suffragette campaign to win votes for women on equal terms with men.

Christabel Pankhurst was the WSPU's key strategist and theorist. She believed that the subordinate status of women in Edwardian society was a result of the power of men and so saw the WSPU, which only admitted women as members, as an important vehicle for fostering a sense of sisterhood that would enable women to stand on their own two feet and articulate their demands. The WSPU's slogan was "Deeds, not words" and at the center of Christabel's political thought was the notion of "militancy," which came to justify the policy and tactics of the suffragettes and to place it within a long tradition of popular radical struggle for constitutional reform. "Militancy" involved women being assertive about their democratic rights, casting aside that false dignity that came with submission, and resisting a tyrannous liberal government. Emmeline Pankhurst eagerly embraced such ideas as did thousands of other women who joined the WSPU.

The first act of militancy is usually identified as taking place on October 13, 1905, when Christabel and Annie Kenney, a working-class suffragette, interrupted a Liberal Party meeting by shouting out "Votes for Women." They were hastily ejected from the hall and imprisoned, and their action made headline news and brought many new recruits to the cause. Noisy protests at Liberal Party meetings became a common tactic as well as deputations to parliament and more symbolic gestures, such as ringing the doorbell of the prime minister's residence on Downing Street. The individual suffragette made her own independent judgment about which militant deeds she would engage in, with some even trying out new tactics without discussion or the approval of the leadership.

For Christabel Pankhurst, the inferior status of women was not a class issue but a problem of inequality between the sexes. Therefore, she did not wish to ally the WSPU to any male political party nor any male-oriented political movement, such as socialism. The WSPU had to become free from class politics and rally all women, irrespective of their political allegiance, and unite them as an independent force. It was in August 1906, at the Cockerham by-election, that the tactic of independence from all men's

political parties, including the Labour Party, was put into practice. A small grouping of disaffected socialist feminists who disagreed with this policy left the WSPU to form another grouping, later called the Women's Freedom League.

By 1909, protesting at Liberal Party meetings was proving increasingly difficult for the suffragettes since women were excluded from such gatherings. In July of that year, imprisoned Marion Wallace Dunlop, on her own initiative, began a hunger strike as a protest against the refusal of the authorities to recognize her as a political offender and, as such, entitled to be placed in the privileged First Division. After 91 hours of fasting, she was released. However, when other suffragettes shortly afterward began to hunger strike, the authorities responded with force feeding. The hunger strike was another form of militant protest, a means of passive resistance against the injustices that women experienced.

By the end of January 1910, Emmeline Pankhurst had called a suspension of all militant tactics, to allow various Conciliation Bills for Women's Suffrage to be presented to parliament. This "truce" with the government remained until November 21, 1911, apart from one week during November 1910. When the various bills failed, militancy was extended in 1912 to include secret attacks on public and private property, such as window-smashing raids in London's West End. Throughout, the WSPU leadership emphasized that the aim was never to endanger human life.

The notion of a "sex-war" between the suffragettes and the all-male liberal government now became prominent, as well as the insistence that the aim of the militant campaign was not just the granting of the parliamentary vote but the abolition of the sexual and economic exploitation of women. Such ideas had a transnational influence, particularly in the United States where the Americans Alice Paul and Lucy Burns, both former members of the WSPU, were determined that their National Women's Party should adopt a more activist approach for the women's cause. Furthermore, it can be argued that the Pankhursts and the suffragettes of the WSPU, in advocating a women-centered separatism, were in many ways forerunners of some of the ideas voiced by radical feminists in Second Wave Feminism in western Europe in the 1970s.

June Purvis

See also [Contract Theory](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Feminism](#); [Liberalism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Wollstonecraft, Mary](#).

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Ralph Darlington Ralph Darlington

Syndicalism

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Syndicalism

Although its ideas were undoubtedly put on the map by the French social philosopher Georges Sorel, who wrote *Reflections on Violence* in 1908, syndicalism was not the creation of one particular writer or even a group of writers. Despite the “ism” that lends it a theoretical air, syndicalism is best described as a *movement* or as a “philosophy of action” that evolved in the everyday struggle to improve workers’ lives, rather than being concerned to develop a unified body of doctrine. Unlike Marxism, the syndicalist movement offered no sweeping explanations of social change and no fundamental theory of revolution, and it produced no great revolutionary theorists to rival those produced by Marxism. But even if they did not produce any profound analytical texts, syndicalists presented coherent and well-argued cases in many of their pamphlets, leaflets, and speeches. Many syndicalist leaders, despite having little formal education, were what might be termed “worker intellectuals”: not only gifted in their line of political involvement and union work but also intellectually engaged and familiar with anarchist and Marxist theory. And syndicalism did add up to a theory, as opposed to a miscellany of more or less loosely constructed propositions on strategies, tactics, and ideology.

To those who were attracted to the syndicalist project, parliamentary democracy and working for reforms through the state were rejected as dead ends. Instead of the statist conception of socialism introduced *from above*, syndicalists insisted that society’s revolutionary transformation necessarily

had to come *from below*, to be the work of the majority, the product of workers' own self-activity and self-organization at the point of production.

Hostility to the conservatism, bureaucracy, and corruption of the socialist party and trade union bureaucracies encouraged an emphasis on the collective "direct action" of workers on the *economic* terrain—with the subordination of all political action to the industrial struggle and the complete independence of syndicalist bodies from all political parties. It followed that the traditional function of reformist trade unionism—struggling to improve wages and working conditions within capitalism through collective bargaining with employers—was regarded as inadequate. Instead, syndicalists campaigned in favor of reconstructed and class-based trade unions that would become militant organizations dedicated to the destruction of capitalism and the state.

They believed the road to the liberation of the working class lay through an intensification of the industrial struggle (involving boycotts, sabotage, strikes, and solidarity action) eventually culminating in a revolutionary general strike that would lead to the overthrow of the capitalist system and its replacement by workers' control of industry and society. Unions would have a double function—as an organ of struggle against the employers on the frontline of the class struggle under the capitalist system and as an organ of economic and industrial administration after its overthrow.

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, amidst an extraordinary international upsurge in strike action, the ideas of revolutionary syndicalism connected with and helped to produce mass workers' movements in a number of different countries across the world. An increasing number of syndicalist unions, committed to destroying capitalism through revolutionary trade union struggle, emerged as either existing unions were won over to syndicalist principles or new alternative revolutionary unions and organizations were formed by dissidents who broke away from their mainstream reformist adversaries. This international movement experienced its greatest vitality in the period immediately preceding and following World War I, from about 1910 until the early 1920s (although the movement in Spain crested later).

Among the largest and most famous unions influenced by syndicalist ideas and practice were the *Confédération Générale du Travail* (CGT) in France, the *Confederación Nacional de Trabajo* (CNT) in Spain, and the *Unione Sindacale Italiana* (USI) in Italy. Syndicalism also became the rallying point for a significant minority of union activists in America, with the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), and in Britain where syndicalism was represented within the prewar Industrial Syndicalist Education League (ISEL) as well as (in a more diffuse form) the leadership of the wartime engineering Shop Stewards' and Workers' Committee Movement. Other notable syndicalist unions and movements existed elsewhere in Europe, Scandinavia, and Latin America, as well as in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and Russia.

The heyday of syndicalism was maintained for only a brief period of 20 or so years. Its existence as a powerful and influential current inside the international trade union movement effectively came to an end with the ebb of the revolutionary workers' struggles that had shaken many countries in the immediate aftermath of World War I, which was followed by employers' and state-directed counter-mobilization and repression. The seizure of state power by Russian workers under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, and the subsequent formation of the Communist International (Comintern) and its trade union arm the Red International of Labour Unions, also proved a decisive ideological and political challenge to the revolutionary syndicalist movement. Afterward, although it remained a residual force in Europe until World War II, syndicalism only survived as a pale shadow of its former self, being displaced partly by a rejuvenated social democracy (which succeeded in containing workers' discontent within established channels) and partly by the new revolutionary communist parties that were subsequently established and that were to rapidly supersede syndicalist organizations in most countries. There was only one important exception: a mass following was retained by anarcho-syndicalism in Spain during the Civil War of 1936–39.

Ralph Darlington

See also [Anarchism](#); [Guild Socialism](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Power](#); [Radicalism](#); [Revolution](#); [Socialism](#); [Sorel](#),

[Georges](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [Utopianism](#)

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Piers H.G. Stephens Piers H.G. Stephens

Technology and Political Thought

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Technology and Political Thought

Although connections of tool use to developing objective knowledge can be traced back to examples of *techné* (art or skill) in Plato, the political implications of technology were not examined until early modernity. Here they intertwined with the birth of the utopian imagination, the first significant text being the *New Atlantis* by Francis Bacon (1561–1626), published in Latin in 1624 and in English in 1627. In utopian fashion, the story imagines an island, Bensalem, centrally organized around Salomon's House, a community of researchers who use Baconian science to master nature, deploying their research to improve society by abundance, even creating synthetic plant organisms. Only the best and brightest can join Salomon's House, and it is hinted that the community has some privileges even over the state, thus, implying that Bacon's utopia is essentially a technocracy.

Bacon's work inspired the Royal Society's founding and has noteworthy wider political significance: He championed Enclosure Acts that replaced traditional complex bundles of access rights to commons with clean-cut private ownership, thus, helping usher in agrarian capitalism, and he justified this by claiming it enabled agricultural experimentation and so increased productivity. Bacon thus anticipated and influenced John Locke's later, betterknown arguments for the value of private ownership and scientific inquiry. However, considerable skepticism remained about the practical worth of scientific research, perhaps most famously expressed in Jonathan Swift's thinly veiled parody of the Royal Society within Book III

of *Gulliver's Travels*, "A Voyage to Laputa" (1726). It was not until the late eighteenth century, with the Industrial Revolution in full swing, that the association of scientific and technological advances with human moral progress was given its classic systematic expression by the French philosopher and mathematician Nicolas de Condorcet (1743–94) in his *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind* (1795). Condorcet argued for human improvement as a consequence of scientific progress, noting progression in nine previous historical epochs and suggesting indefinite continuity toward a utopian society.

The political significance of technology becomes much more clearly manifest in Karl Marx's 1845 manuscript *The German Ideology*. Unpublished until 1932, the work argues that different historical epochs are defined by the material structure of production in society, thus, giving a key role to technology in determining socioeconomic structure. Although critical of technology's role in alienation under capitalism, Marx nonetheless retained Enlightenment optimism about its liberatory potential, an optimism that twentieth-century neo-Marxians often rejected—thus, key Frankfurt school thinkers such as Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, and Herbert Marcuse suggested ways in which technology is directly implicated in contemporary forms of domineering instrumental rationality and the commodification of human experience.

From a conservative political direction, a slightly similar critique of modern technology's capacity to enframe comes from Martin Heidegger's essay *The Question Concerning Technology*, and indeed all these thinkers have been invoked by the contemporary ecological movement. More recently, thinkers such as Albert Borgmann and Richard Sclove have suggested that technology in contemporary society has acquired a dynamic of its own—a "device paradigm" in Borgmann's model—which can subtly reduce rich experiential patterns to simple instrumentality and/or slowly subvert community life and democratic practices unless collectively regulated in a democratic manner. All such critics reject both simple technological optimism and the common view of technology as essentially value-neutral, although the debate between neutralists and non-neutralists continues to be central to the field.

Other thinkers such as Ivan Illich and Langdon Winner, although similarly non-neutralist while sensitive to phenomenology and direct experience, have focused on more clearly political ways that certain types of technology may imply, reinforce, or presuppose particular structures of authority and organization, as when railroads imply centralized management structures or solar panel technology implies options for local control of electricity. Most recently, the questions raised by new deep technologies such as biotechnology and nanotechnology have led to significant debates over the ontology of nature and artifacts and call for a revival of the pragmatist ethical tradition to deal with the radically new type of problems so generated.

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See also [Alienation](#); [Capitalism](#); [Communism](#), [Varieties of](#); [Condorcet, Marquis de](#); [Environmentalism](#), [Ecology, and Political Thought](#); [Fourier, Charles](#); [Frankfurt School](#); [Globalization](#); [Heidegger, Martin](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Owen, Robert](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Planning](#); [Progress](#); [Socialism](#); [Utopianism](#)

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Terrorism

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Terrorism

Terrorism is the use or threat of violence or physical harm against persons in a way calculated to terrorize a group of people, with the hope that their terror will make it easier to achieve one's political goals. Hence, terrorism is not an ideology but one kind of political tactic or way of trying to achieve political goals. This entry addresses in turn the history of the concept and the current philosophical disputes about it.

History

The word *terrorism* and the concept of terrorism first entered general use in the 1790s during the French Revolution's Reign of Terror. The concept may have first been used by the Revolutionary Jacobin government to proudly describe its policy, implemented during 1793 and 1794, of terrorizing the population into submission with hasty show trials and mass executions of "enemies of the people." However, the concept was quickly adopted by the Revolution's enemies, such as Edmund Burke, as a neutral label for the tactic. Soon thereafter, people began to think that the word *terrorism* could acceptably be used as a term of opprobrium, such that any act counted as terrorism if it was violent, if it aimed to promote fear, and if the word-user disapproved of either the violence, the fear-promotion, or the goals these aimed to achieve. This sense of terrorism, which we could call "terrorism in the opprobrious sense," looms large today.

In the nineteenth century, certain political groups in Europe and the Americas proudly described their methods as terrorist. Some groups of anarchists, socialists, syndicalists, and nationalists proudly adopted terrorism as a means of drawing attention to how thoroughly, they thought, their society violated the demands of justice. They usually did so by assassinating political personages. Thus, they targeted state governments as well as society at large, demonstrating that terrorism can also be a weapon the weak can use against the powerful.

At the same time, and partly inspired by these self-described terrorist acts, “terrorism” acquired a new sense that has shaped discussions of terrorism down to the present. In this sense, an act is terrorist if it uses or threatens some *prima facie* wrongful sort of violence to spread fear as a way of achieving political goals. We may call this phenomenon “terrorism in the wrongful-violence sense” because it implies that terrorism is, on its face, always wrong. Of these conceptions, the most popular and plausible holds that terrorism necessarily uses or threatens violence toward innocent persons or non-combatants: We may call this “the innocent-persons conception” of terrorism. Because directing violence at innocent persons is *prima facie* wrong, terrorism on this conception is always *prima facie* wrong. This conception implied that the question of whether anarchists’ or syndicalists’ assassinations of political figures were *prima facie* wrong turned on whether these officials were innocent persons or instead suitably culpable for the injustices the terrorists were challenging. Many debates in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century over the justifiability of such terrorism were carried out in roughly these terms.

The twentieth century might be called “the century of terrorism” since during its course terrorism came to be deployed by both state and nonstate groups on an unprecedented scale. Many parties in the civil war after the Russian Revolution sought to terrorize populations into submission. The Bolsheviks, upon their victory, established a political police whose chief tool was terrorism: They persecuted all opponents of the party and persecuted nonopponents at random, with the clear aim of terrorizing the people into submission. These methods would enthusiastically be adopted by the political police of Fascist states and other totalitarian regimes, prompting Hannah Arendt’s famous remark that “terror is the essence of

totalitarian domination” (1973, 464). They were also used, albeit in a more secretive and targeted fashion, by the authoritarian governments of South America’s Southern Cone in the dirty wars of the 1970s and 1980s.

States also conducted terrorism by the new method of terror bombing of cities. The tactic of carpet bombing a city, with the aim of terrorizing its population into surrender, was pioneered by the Luftwaffe’s Condor Legion against the town of Guernica in the Spanish Civil War. The tactic was quickly adopted by all sides in World War II, not least by Allied bombers against Axis cities. Indeed, the U.S. atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki could well be called the most successful terrorist acts in history since they terrorized the Japanese people into immediate and unconditional surrender.

Nonstate terrorism also flourished during the twentieth century. The Irish Republican Army, the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Baader-Meinhof Gang of Germany, the Red Brigades in Italy, the Zionist Stern Gang of pre-Israel Palestine, and the African National Congress all performed well-publicized terrorist acts. At the same time, the innocent-persons conception of terrorism had by the 1970s become perhaps the most popular conception of terrorism. As a result, the slogan “one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter” became widely used. For where one person would call a violent act “terrorism” because it targeted persons he or she deemed innocent, another would reject that label out of the belief that the targets were suitably responsible for the evil the alleged terrorists complained of.

In response to nonstate terrorism, states both retaliated with violence and formed counterterrorism organizations. This strategy gave rise in the 1970s to a statist counterterrorism discourse that has gone from strength to strength, a discourse that has created a new sense of the word *terrorism*. In this sense, although nonstate groups can perform terrorist acts, the state and officials acting on its orders never can: We may call this “terrorism in the free-pass-for-states sense.” U.S. federal law enshrines this sense: U.S. Code Title 22, Section 2656(f), defines terrorism as “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents.” This definition implies that state agents can

never commit terrorism as part of their publicly acknowledged work for the state. If anything, this sense of “terrorism” has become only more popular after the events of September 11, 2001.

Philosophy

Two main questions now roil the philosophy of terrorism. The first is conceptual: What exactly is terrorism? The second is moral: When, if ever, would terrorism not be absolutely wrong? The first question is logically prior because how we answer it will shape how we answer the second; but it is not clear that how we answer the second question will shape how we answer the first.

There are, broadly speaking, two schools of thought about the conceptual question. One maintains that only wrongful-violence conceptions can adequately answer the question: Its proponents tend to argue that genuine terrorism always necessarily targets innocent persons or noncombatants. The other school denies that the use or threat of violence must be *prima facie* wrongful because of whom it targets or how it is performed: All that is needed, they maintain, is that the violence try to further political goals by trying to produce terror. These have usefully been labeled “narrow” and “wide” conceptions of terrorism, respectively.

What hangs on the choice between the narrow and wide conceptions? Chiefly, it is a question of how high we should set the bar that a terrorist act must clear in order not to be absolutely wrong. The narrow definition sets that bar higher since it holds that terrorism uses or threatens (1) violence in a *prima facie* (2) wrongful way to (3) promote fear. The wide definition sets it lower since it holds only that terrorism uses or threatens (1) violence to (2) promote fear. Narrow-conception theorists argue that their view allows us to distinguish morally between political assassinations (not terrorist) and airliner bombings (terrorist) and between shock-and-awe precision bombing of military targets (not terrorist) and carpet bombing of cities (terrorist). Wide-conception theorists argue that their view makes better sense of the uses to which the concept has been put historically, and that because it is more morally neutral than the narrow conception, it can address the moral question with less baggage. This argument is the wide-conception theorists’

underlying motivation for rejecting narrow conceptions. Such conceptions, the argument goes, fixate our attention on the query: Were the targets of the used or threatened violence suitably responsible for the alleged evil the potential terrorists wish to avert? If the answer is “Yes,” then the next query is as follows: In exactly what way was each target suitably responsible? If instead the answer is “No,” then the act was *prima facie* wrong, and debate then either stops or shifts to the following query: Was the badness of targeting these innocents outweighed by the goodness of averting the evil attributed to the terrorists?

In either case, we are impeded from focusing directly on the following question: Just how bad is the evil the terrorists complain of, so that they would use this shocking means to avert it? For if we answer “Yes” to the narrow-conception query, this question does not arise. But if we answer “No,” then the question arises only in a perfunctory way since it arises as only one part of a costs-versus-benefits problem. The problem’s structure encourages us to give a hasty and perfunctory answer to the question so that we will never have a good and complete answer to it. But without a good answer, we cannot clearly see what justice there is in the terrorists’ complaints. We are then unlikely to make reasonable accommodation for whatever is just in the alleged terrorists’ complaints and will likely decline to give good reasons against alleged terrorists with unjust complaints. Either way, the alleged terrorists will justifiably think that we refuse to listen to reason and so will have additional grounds for continuing to use terrorism. In sum, the trouble with narrow conceptions is that they encourage an endless cycle of violence and complacency about real evils. Wide conceptions, by contrast, lead us to examine the roots of terrorist violence and to be mindful that there may be real evils we have not hitherto perceived.

On the moral question of terrorism, contemporary philosophers tend to agree that the important issue is as follows: When, if ever, would terrorism that targets innocent persons or noncombatants not be absolutely wrong? A few philosophers, such as Stephen Nathanson, argue that terrorism in this narrow sense is of necessity absolutely wrong either because absolute civilian immunity from violence is the moral rule that best promotes everyone’s interests in this domain or, as Nicholas Fotion has argued,

because violence against innocents is necessarily wrong unless there is no morally less costly alternative, and there is always a less costly alternative than violence against innocents.

Other philosophers, such as Virginia Held, argue that terrorism against innocents is sometimes not absolutely wrong. From one view, against-innocents terrorism is not absolutely wrong if and only if there is widespread violation of the human rights of one group *X* by another group *Y*, if the only way of stopping the violations and ensuring universal respect for human rights is terrorism against innocents, and if the innocents are members of the advantaged group *Y*. From a stricter view (e.g., Michael Walzer), against-innocents terrorism is not absolutely wrong if and only if it is the only way of averting an imminent danger that something “immeasurably awful” will occur. From an equally strict view (e.g., Igor Primoratz), against-innocents terrorism is not absolutely wrong if and only if there are very good grounds for deeming it the only way of preventing or stopping genocide or ethnic cleansing.

Thoughtful people bitterly dispute terrorism’s nature and morality. But one proposition is undisputed: There are no easy answers when it comes to terrorism.

Thomas J. Donahue

See also [Anarchism](#); [Arendt, Hannah](#); [Empire and Political Thought](#); [Fascism](#); [Fanon, Frantz](#); [French Revolution, Political Thought of the](#); [Gandhi, Mohandas \(Mahatma\)](#); [Lenin and Leninism](#); [National Socialism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Progress](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Revolution](#); [Russian Revolution, Political Thought of the](#); [Stalin and Stalinism](#); [Totalitarianism](#); [Trotsky, Leon](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [War and Political Thought](#)

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Thoreau, Henry David

Henry David Thoreau (1817–62) detested love of wealth and its pursuit. His work and life are dominated by this principled aversion. The reasons for this aversion are several. A life obsessively devoted to wealth and its pursuit brings recurrent dissatisfaction, which shows itself in “quiet desperation.” This desperation can be assuaged only by the love of nature and the disposition to appreciate it for its beauty, indefatigable fecundity, and complex intricacy. But the economic life blocks perception of nature and narrows attention to exploiting it and often ruining it. So that if there is a great inherent but unappreciated cost when one commits oneself to economic life with frenzied passion, and if the further cost is an inevitable stultifying indifference to nature appreciated for its own sake, there is yet another lamentable effect: blindness to the evil that exists amidst organized social and political life. Even where there is no active commission of evil, there is acceptance of its material and psychological benefits or at least complacent acquiescence in it. For Thoreau, slavery is evil, the essence of evil. In its dehumanization of millions of people, it shows how far the unscrupulous love of wealth and its pursuit can go; its constitutional enshrinement compounds the evil and makes the whole free population accessories to it, while bringing down on the antislavery movements, which after all represent only a small minority of the country, savage opposition or deep dislike. Thoreau’s indictment of the love of wealth and its pursuit is the key to understanding his relentless and thoroughgoing critique of

society. He finds its aesthetic impoverishment infuriating and its moral degradation abhorrent.

In his most famous work, *Walden* (1854), Thoreau says that when human institutions are submitted to a “true gaze,” they “would all go to pieces in your account of them.” This applies to “a meeting house, or a court-house, or a jail, or a shop, or a dwelling-house.” All of them are at best makeshift, the scenes of unhappiness, mistaken assumptions, and hypocrisy. The one human relationship Thoreau unequivocally praises is friendship, about which he writes at length in his *Journal* and in *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* (1849). Friendship can end in disappointment, but it is the one bond that is potentially an expression of genuine freedom and equality. Indeed it is the one kind of love that Thoreau writes about with positive feeling. But it is the go-getting and indeed rapacious economic system that Thoreau deplores above all. A key to his sense of the drive behind it is found in his formulation that people in their pursuit of wealth are “determined to be starved before they are hungry” (*Walden*). Of course, love of wealth is in part love of the goods, the greater convenience, comfort, and sensory exploration that wealth brings. Thoreau does not always find it easy to disparage these goods consistently. But in the great majority, there is a possessive overloading as well as a refusal to take seriously the imperative: “simplify, simplify” (*Walden*). The will to feel starved when one is possessed of assured sufficiency shows that one sees in ever more wealth a sign of mastery of the world or, at the least, a mastery of one’s own part of the world. Yet there is no evidence that the quest for mastery can ever be satisfied by definitive conquest. As a young man of 20, Thoreau hopes that the “bright side” of the excesses of avarice is evidence that “man will not always be the slave of matter” (“Commercial Spirit,” 1837); but with maturity, Thoreau lost belief in the bright side. Enslaving nature is not the answer to being enslaved by matter. Not only are there the perpetuation and expansion of slavery and the conquest of Mexico, but the California gold rush, the description of which in “Life without Principle” (1854) rivals Herman Melville’s characterizations of brutal selfishness. Thoreau says that the prospectors “turned into demons” looking for gold and devastating nature in the process.

Thoreau's supreme affirmation is not humanity but nature (a word he often capitalizes, as if to divinize it). *Walden* is a portrait of a young man trying to get as close to nature as possible and to imbibe the wisdom he detects in it. He lived in a hut he built by Walden Pond from July 4, 1845, to September 6, 1847. Thoreau's most exquisite writing on nature is found in *Walden*, but much of the *Journal* (14 volumes) consists of detailed descriptions of countless natural phenomena; these descriptions add up to a powerful display of his capacity for attention and for the painstaking effort to articulate his impressions. Thoreau finds in nature not just prettiness but also innocence and wildness, which for him are nearly synonymous terms, and the adequacy of every creature and plant to its niche and function, and the ability of everything nonhuman to be at one with itself. If we think, however, that nature at Concord is too benign to be a true test of character, too easy to like, we should recall that in the "Ktaadn" section (1848) of *The Maine Woods* (1864), Thoreau is overwhelmed by sublimity (not mere beauty) and almost made speechless by standing alone at the top of a mountain and experiencing matter in itself, the matter under and around him, as "vast and drear and inhuman," that is, as always alien and not to be encompassed by human concepts. Even the matter of which his body is made becomes alien to him. And in *Cape Cod* (1865), he exposes himself to the sublimity of the great ocean, "naked Nature, inhumanly sincere, wasting no thought on man," and to the human, not quite fully human, life built improbably on sands.

Thoreau as a philosopher of the conduct of life—to borrow a phrase from Thoreau's inspiration and neighboring genius, Ralph Waldo Emerson—has exerted tremendous influence on his readers, especially from the late nineteenth century to the present. Leo Tolstoy, Mohandas K. Gandhi, and Marcel Proust all admired him. His influence as a specifically political philosopher has also been great and results from a mere handful of essays and lectures. He teaches the politics of resistance. Opposition to slavery is the *raison d'être* of all his political thinking. His most famous political essay, "Civil Disobedience," was published in 1849 as "Resistance to Civil Government," which is arguably the better title. Thoreau is not consistently teaching nonviolence in that essay, let alone in two other brilliant later speeches, "Slavery in Massachusetts" (1854) and "A Plea for John Brown" (1859). To be sure, after he refused to pay the annual poll (head) tax in

1846, he accepted his punishment, not knowing beforehand how long he would be imprisoned. (He spent only one night in jail because apparently an aunt paid the tax for him.) He used no force or weapon in protest or to resist arrest. He hoped that his disobedience would provoke many others to disobey on his grounds, namely, that the Mexican War was a war of aggression at the behest of the slave power and that the whole Union, including the supposedly free state of Massachusetts, was dedicated to the preservation of slavery. To justify nonviolent disobedience of the law, he appeals to conscience—that is, the ability not to overlook the obvious fact that slavery is an enormous evil. But in “Slavery in Massachusetts,” he advocates forcible resistance to the official effort to send a runaway slave (Anthony Burns) back from Massachusetts to his owner in the South. His plea for John Brown is an unqualified defense of violent resistance to the institution of slavery. All three pieces are compressed utterances of political morality and deserve to be read and reread as long as political theory is studied. They, too, show his genius.

George Kateb

See also [American Political Thought](#); [Capitalism](#); [Civil Disobedience](#); [Environmentalism](#), [Ecology](#), and [Political Thought](#); [Equality and Egalitarianism](#); [Liberalism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Progress](#); [Radicalism](#); [Romanticism](#)

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Tocqueville, Alexis de

Alexis de Tocqueville (1805–59) burst onto the intellectual scene in 1835 with the publication of the first volume of *Democracy in America*. He has never left it. Today the two volumes of *Democracy* (volume two published in 1840), and his book on the French Revolution, *The Old Regime and the Revolution* (1856), are considered masterpieces. Regularly translated into many languages, often the subject of commentary, and constantly cited in newspapers and magazines as well as scholarly publications on both sides of the Atlantic, Tocqueville is a central figure in contemporary political thought. As much as anyone, he has become the master thinker of our democratic era.

Biography

Tocqueville was born to an old French aristocratic family. His parents had barely escaped the guillotine in 1794 during the French Revolution's Terror. After the Bourbon Monarchy was restored in 1815, his father Hervé de Tocqueville served the new government, and the young Alexis de Tocqueville attended law school and served briefly as an unpaid assistant prosecutor. He read widely, particularly in seventeenth-century French classics and the authors of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. He would later write that there were three writers he always carried with him, Blaise Pascal, Charles-Louis Montesquieu, and Jean Jacques Rousseau. He also attended the lectures of the great historian and later Prime Minister François

Guizot, whose approach to studying social questions influenced him profoundly.

In 1830, the Bourbon monarchy was overthrown and replaced by the July Monarchy of King Louis-Philippe. Unlike his father and brothers, Tocqueville took the loyalty oath demanded of public officials. Finding the atmosphere uncomfortable, he obtained leave to go to America with his friend Gustave de Beaumont to study the American prison system. The 11 months they spent in America from 1831 to 1832 resulted in a long study about prisons. More importantly, it resulted in *Democracy in America*. The book was a huge success when published in 1835, and Tocqueville was hailed as a “modern Montesquieu.” In the same year, over the objections of his family, he married Mary Mottley, a middle-class Englishwoman six years his elder. The marriage was childless. On the strength largely of his literary reputation, Tocqueville was elected to the French parliament in 1839 and remained there for the rest of his political career, which lasted until 1852.

Tocqueville was not a successful politician. His public speaking was limited by a weak voice, an early symptom of the tuberculosis that would eventually kill him. He was dissatisfied with the political parties of the era but failed in his effort to create a new one. When the Revolution of 1848 overthrew the July Monarchy and replaced it with a republic, Tocqueville was upset at the event but nevertheless found the new political environment favorable to his personal success. For five months in 1849, he was Minister of Foreign Affairs, but loyal to constitutional government, he opposed the coup d'état of December 1851 that brought Napoleon III to the throne in 1852. He was briefly imprisoned during the coup and then released. From 1852 until his death in 1859, he retired from active participation in political life although remaining as active an opponent of the Second Empire as possible without incurring exile or imprisonment.

In political retirement, Tocqueville turned again to writing to influence his country. He wrote a memoir of the events of 1848, the *Recollections*, intended for posthumous publication. To speak to his contemporaries, he turned his attention to the great event of recent history, the French Revolution. *The Old Regime and the Revolution* was intended as the first of

two volumes, but progress on the second was interrupted by his death in 1859.

Major Works

Democracy in America

Democracy in America has often been called the best book ever written about the United States. It is full of brilliant, often-quoted perceptions of American society and politics. But *Democracy in America* is first a book about democracy. America is its setting, not its subject. Tocqueville paid careful attention to America because America was the closest thing to a pure example of democracy in 1835. In many respects, it still is, and this is one reason for the enduring fascination of Tocqueville's work.

What is democracy, according to Tocqueville? It is two things: a social state and a political system. Democracy is a social state in which people are considered equal. *Democracy in America* is a book about what life is like when people live their lives surrounded by people they consider in principle to be no better or worse than themselves. In democratic societies, people may not have the same endowment of money, brains, or beauty, but they expect to be treated as everyone else's moral and legal and social equal. They are subject to the same laws, and their souls are presumed to be of equal worth in the eyes of God. Difference is the exception, not the rule, and must be justified, whereas in an aristocratic society, the opposite of a democratic one, difference is the rule, and it is equality that is the exception and requires special justification. Tocqueville was obsessed by democracy because he realized that democratic social conditions were inevitably coming to France and indeed to the whole world. Tocqueville chose to write about America because it was the archetypal democratic society. Unlike Europe, it had never had an aristocracy.

Tocqueville was sure the future would be democratic—that is, egalitarian—but he was not sure it would be free. Freedom was Tocqueville's most important value, almost his religion. He was frightened of future societies in which everyone was equal but equally subject to despotic power.

Tocqueville went to America not only to study democracy as a social state but also to study how democracy could be combined with freedom—combined with what Tocqueville sometimes called “democratic institutions,” that is, democracy as a political form. The fact that the United States had remained free, that the 13 colonies had not degenerated into dictatorships, as France itself had done for some time after 1789, was central to America’s attraction for Tocqueville. He knew it was a question that mattered to the entire world.

The problem that confronted Tocqueville was that, in his view, people in democratic times love freedom, but they love equality even more. Equality is far more attractive than freedom to most people in democratic societies, he argued. It is hard for people to recognize, for example, that their long-term economic prosperity is a result of their political freedom, and easy for them to attribute prosperity to other causes. By contrast, it is easy to see when political freedom leads to short-term economic problems. The benefits of freedom are long term and its costs are immediate. People “want equality in liberty, and if they cannot have it, they want it still in slavery.” (The best translation of *Democracy* is by Arthur Goldhammer, New York, 2004. See p. 584.) Over the course of his life, Tocqueville slowly moved from optimism about the future of freedom to pessimism. In *Democracy in America*, he was, on the whole, an optimist, at least in the first volume.

In *Democracy*, Tocqueville explains the choice democratic societies face between despotism and freedom. He explores how American laws, institutions, and above all mores help preserve freedom. Most importantly, he shows what lessons America can and cannot teach other societies with different histories and cultures.

The first volume of *Democracy* (1835) is oriented toward American peculiarities. The second volume (1840) is more abstract, oriented more toward analyzing democracy in general. Commentators debate whether the two volumes are really two books, perhaps with contrasting conclusions, or a single, more or less coherent work. Tocqueville’s understanding of democracy did change over time, but like someone going up a spiral staircase, he kept circling the same core issues.

Some universal threats to freedom in democratic societies that Tocqueville identified in America were the tyranny of the majority, individualism, materialism, and centralization. He found remedies there too: association, enlightened self-interest, and religion. These threats and their remedies were relevant to all democratic societies even if they could not always be applied in the same way. Particular to America was slavery, which Tocqueville discussed at length.

The problem of the “tyranny of the majority” is one of the most famous that Tocqueville addressed. The problem is not that the majority rules—that is part of democracy. The problem is that in a democratic society, the majority is naturally omnipotent. Individuals have no means to resist it, slow it down, or moderate it. For example, according to Tocqueville, thought was less free in America than anywhere else on Earth even though there was no censorship. Majority opinion did the censor’s work. Individuals were threatened with both the tyranny of a democratic government, imposed from above, and the tyranny of a democratic society, imposed from below.

The remedy that the Americans had found to this problem, Tocqueville thought, was association. By joining together with others in groups formed for everything from building a new school to discouraging the consumption of alcohol, they acquired the power to resist tyranny. In Europe, governments often feared private associations as potential revolutionary bodies. But for Tocqueville, they were a bulwark of freedom. By allowing all kinds of associations to flourish, America found that they balanced one another and became a source of stability. Because America had free elections with universal male suffrage, no association could claim to speak for everyone and, thus, claim a right to replace the government. Instead, associations allowed Americans to express opinions that as individuals they would have been powerless to make heard. At the same time, it taught them about politics and about freedom.

Associations also helped to combat another threat that Tocqueville thought democratic societies faced, “individualism.” Tocqueville defined individualism as the tendency of people in democratic societies not to care about anyone except their own family and friends. When people are individualistic in this way, they are not selfish since they do care about

some other people, but they do not care about society as a whole. This mattered to Tocqueville because he cared about freedom, and he was afraid that individualists would not. What does a dictatorship matter to an individualist as long as it does not harm his or her family or friends? Apathy is the natural political state of the individualist. Associations, and the need to associate with others to attain personal goals, restrain individualism by encouraging people to care about their neighbors and their larger community.

Tocqueville saw “enlightened self-interest” as another remedy for individualism. Individualists care only about the education of their own children. But if they display enlightened self-interest, they will care about the education of all children in their school because that will affect their own children. They may even care about the educational level of her city or country, for the same reason. Enlightened self-interest has many of the same effects as virtue. It encourages people to join associations and to recognize that society as a whole matters to them. According to Tocqueville, enlightened self-interest was widespread in America.

Tocqueville also feared the tendency of democratic people to care about nothing but making money since money was the only means to rise in a democratic society, and people had no hereditary position to fall back on. People who only care about making money will not care much about freedom as long as tyranny does not disturb their work. If freedom disturbs their economic well-being, they may well be inclined to give up freedom. Tocqueville asked what could lead people to care about something other than wealth and thought that one answer was God. It is difficult to overestimate the importance of religion in Tocqueville’s analysis of *Democracy in America*. Partly this is because the idea that religion and freedom could be friends was surprising to Tocqueville’s French contemporaries, his intended audience, who usually saw religion, in particular the Catholic Church, as the ally of tyrannical governments. But for Tocqueville, religion was a necessary bulwark for freedom, especially in a democratic society. By helping people turn away from money-making and individualism, it provided essential support for freedom.

The fact that America allowed religious freedom, and that so many different religions flourished there, helped counteract the last and perhaps most persistent danger to freedom in democratic societies, centralization. Tocqueville approved of centralized government in some things, like foreign policy. But he feared a central government that controlled everything, roads, police, education, and so on. It took freedom and initiative away from people and transferred it to some faraway place that they felt they could not influence. Centralization led to popular resignation, apathy, and eventually tyranny.

But association, enlightened self-interest, and religion, all widely found in American society, opposed centralization as they opposed those other threats to freedom in democratic society, the tyranny of the majority and individualism. Associations demanded local influence. Enlightened self-interest fought apathy. Religion emphasized a different source of authority. They were remedies for democracy's ills, and they were themselves eminently democratic, or at least not antidemocratic. They were also examples of the power of *mores*. By "mores" Tocqueville meant a people's intellectual and moral state. Mores, for him, were more important than laws or political institutions. The mores of Americans were those of a democratic people who had never known aristocracy. Even more importantly, they were those of a free people.

But in one way American mores were not those of a free people. America practiced slavery, and for this, neither the Americans of 1835–40 nor Tocqueville had any remedy. Tocqueville opposed slavery and worked to abolish it in the French colonies. But Tocqueville thought that in America, the white population's racial attitudes would lead to hostilities, if not civil war, between whites and blacks if slavery were abolished—a forecast that to some extent came true after the American Civil War when abolition was followed by many decades of systematic suppression of the civil rights of the ex-slaves and their descendants.

America, for all its virtues, was thus by no means a paradise for Tocqueville. Not all the remedies for democracy's ills found there could be applied elsewhere since other countries had different histories that, for example, made complete freedom of political association more dangerous

than in America. But America nonetheless pointed the way forward to a future in which freedom and democracy could be combined.

France was unable to follow that path, at least not in Tocqueville's lifetime. After Napoleon III's coup d'état, Tocqueville wrote *The Old Regime and the Revolution* in an effort to understand and explain why.

The Old Regime and the Revolution

The Old Regime and the Revolution is a continuation of the story Tocqueville had already told in an America setting, the story of democracy and freedom—but this time with an unhappy ending. Its themes are often familiar to readers of *Democracy*. In *The Old Regime*, Tocqueville is still preoccupied with the effects of centralization and contrasts its history in France with its history elsewhere. Other concerns of *Democracy* reappear although sometimes altered. For example, the concept of individualism is transformed: Rather than emphasizing the individualism and materialism of isolated persons, *The Old Regime* portrays the collective individualism and isolation of classes. Instead of talking about how religion supports freedom, *The Old Regime* analyzes why freedom and religion are perceived as mortal enemies in France. Tocqueville thus continues to examine the relationship between democracy and freedom, but in the French context the relationship becomes largely negative.

This conclusion was devastating to Tocqueville. Finding an explanation for it, and ideally a way to reverse it, is at the heart of his enterprise in *The Old Regime*. Tocqueville never pretended to be interested in the past for its own sake: “I admit that in studying our old society in all its aspects, I have never entirely lost sight of our modern society” (Kahan translation, Chicago, 1998, 86).

The Old Regime and the Revolution concentrates on how France evolved from the late middle ages, and especially the seventeenth century, to the decades before the French Revolution began, traditionally on July 14, 1789. (Tocqueville planned to write a second volume that would have started in 1787 and run through the Revolution proper, but he did not live to complete it.) The “old regime” was the name by which the last two centuries of the

monarchy were known. Tocqueville's book was about the relationship between the French Revolution and French history, and what that history meant for France's future.

In *The Old Regime*, Tocqueville challenged much conventional wisdom about the Revolution. He argued that its goal “Was Not, As Has Been Thought, to Destroy Religion and Weaken the State” (p. 96). Nor was it some sudden or even peculiarly French development. The French Revolution was the culmination of a centuries-long process that had taken place throughout European society, the gradual replacement of aristocracy by democracy—in the Tocquevillian sense of democracy as an egalitarian social state. Why did the Revolution that revealed this social change first happen in France? In what way was the French Revolution the result of France's particular history and culture, and what was the result of the progress of democracy?

Part of the answer was that the French Revolution was a long story, much longer than most people realized at the time or later. This is known as the “continuity thesis.” In the most well-known example, Tocqueville described how over centuries the French had centralized their state, how the government had done its best to discourage association and encourage individualism and materialism to maximize royal power. The French nobility had ceased to govern, ceased to be a real aristocracy, and had become merely a caste with hereditary financial privileges, hated by the middle classes, who themselves possessed privileges that made them hated by the peasants. The government encouraged class divisions to increase its own power. While others had attributed French centralization to the Revolution or to Napoleon, for Tocqueville, it was a long story, one in which the Revolution was but the final stage. Both left and right were offended by the continuity thesis in Tocqueville's time, and have often been since, but the thesis has gradually gained acceptance.

The continuity thesis answered the crucial question, “Who killed French freedom?” by blaming the monarchy and its ministers above all. But the monarchy was not the only culprit, in Tocqueville's view. The aristocracy, the bourgeoisie, and the Catholic Church all bore guilt as accomplices, all too ready to trade away freedom in return for material or spiritual

privileges. The urban poor and peasantry were innocent but no less crippled—they could not help adopting many of the mores of the classes above them, ideas and feelings that if not hostile to freedom, left them little prepared to exercise it.

There is one other group Tocqueville singles out for blame for the Revolution's failure to bring about a free society in France: the intellectuals. As democracy progressed, it was natural that people should develop ideas that favored equality. But the ideas of French intellectuals went well beyond this. Cut off, like the rest of the French population, from any real political experience because the government forbade participation, they espoused general ideas that made little or no allowance for the actual social and political situation of France. Their ideas were ideas suitable for encouraging a revolution but not for ending one. As a result, they contributed greatly to the alternation of anarchy and dictatorship that took place during the Revolution and culminated in what Tocqueville saw as Napoleon's despotism.

The intellectuals' ideas were important because they were the dominant ones in late-eighteenth-century France, and this gave rise to another difference between France and America, the different relationship between democracy and religion. In America, democracy and religion were allies. In France, they were perceived as deadly enemies. The intellectuals disputed the Church's intellectual domination, and since there was only one Church, intimately linked with the Crown, the cause of democracy became attached to anticlericalism. Into the vacuum left by Christianity rushed a new religion, a secular religion, the religion of revolution. It was this religious fervor that made the French Revolution into a European and worldwide event, rather than merely a French one.

Nevertheless, the revolution was not made simply out of a combination of resentment and desire for equality. There was also a real desire for freedom in France in 1789, which produced the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen of 1789, a great document of freedom, in Tocqueville's view. The problem was that the old regime had prepared the French much better for equality, and had accustomed them much better to despotism, than it had taught them how to maintain their freedom. Unlike the Americans,

most of their mores inclined them in the wrong direction. The French knew how to make revolutions but not how to be free. In *The Old Regime*, Tocqueville was pessimistic about the future of freedom in France.

Tocqueville Today

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Tocqueville's reputation and influence are at their height among both historians and political scientists. In America, he has always been and remains a landmark. In France, Tocqueville's reputation has followed a more checkered path, but Tocqueville has now become almost as omnipresent on the French scene as on the American. Tocqueville's ideas have become central to the way both America and France understand themselves as well as to many contemporary understandings of democratic society. Beyond his easy quotability, beyond the decline of Marxism, there is a reason why Tocqueville is popular today. Tocqueville's attempt to understand democracy is what makes him so valuable to thinkers and politicians alike. His discussion of the threats to freedom in democratic societies, and the remedies to those threats, has proved to be of lasting interest in the postcommunist world.

Even if he would not always agree with their interpretations of his thought, Tocqueville would certainly not have objected to contemporary efforts to adapt his work to the task of encouraging freedom today. Chief among these efforts is perhaps his discussion of the role of private associations in promoting freedom in democratic societies. Through the idea of association, Tocqueville is central to modern discussions of "civil society," those aspects of society independent of the state and of religion. Indeed, he would have felt deeply flattered at the relevance of his ideas. But flattered as he might be, it is hard to imagine him being any less concerned today than when he died in 1859 for the future of freedom. Insofar as Tocqueville has remained relevant, it is because we too live in a democratic world where the future of freedom is not assured.

Alan Kahan

See also [American Political Thought](#); [Civil Society](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Equality and Egalitarianism](#); [French Political Thought](#); [French Revolution](#), [Political Thought of the](#); [Individualism](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Montesquieu, Baron de](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Progress](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Republicanism](#); [Revolution](#); [Rousseau, Jean-Jacques](#); [State, Theories of the](#)

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Toleration

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Toleration

Toleration is the attitude and corresponding conduct that allow for the peaceful coexistence of conflicting views and ways of life within the same society. According to the standard definition in the current philosophical debate, toleration means noninterference with practices, actions, and views of some people that the potential tolerator objects to and has the power to obstruct. Circumstances for toleration are thus differences of opinions, lifestyles, and practices:

which are *disliked* by the potential tolerator
which are considered *important* both by the potential tolerator and by the potential tolerated (otherwise we have *indifference*)
about which the potential tolerator possesses *power of interference* of some kind (otherwise we have just *acquiescence*)

Toleration occurs when agent A objects to conduct x of agent B, and has the power to prevent B from doing x , but nevertheless refrains from intervening for some reason(s). The nature of such reasons may be (1) prudential, such as the preference for peace over conflict or the political convenience of forbearance over repression; (2) epistemological, such as a skeptical argument about the truth of religious and moral convictions, or the value of pluralism; and (3) moral, such as respect for other persons and for their choices and integrity. When the reasons for noninterference trump or exclude the reasons for objecting to conduct x , then toleration follows. For

toleration to be a value, though, some further conditions are required, concerning, first, the reasons for dislike and, second, the limits of toleration:

1. The dislike, which is the primary precondition for toleration to occur, should concern, on the one hand, objects that are not improper to disapprove of in the first place, and, on the other, objects that are not categorically wrong. If the dislike concerns, for example, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation of someone, that is, ascribed or inherited traits that cannot be changed, then overcoming one's distaste is not an exercise in toleration because there are good moral reasons to think that disapproval in this case is unjustified; in this case, the right thing to do is to review the racist or homophobic attitude rather than to become a tolerant racist. If, by contrast, the object of disapproval belongs to the class of what is universally condemned and categorically wrong, such as homicide, torture, or sadistic actions, then suspending interference would be a culpable indulgence, for in this case being tolerant would infringe on the rights of others. Toleration, therefore, is an appropriate response when we are experiencing a justifiable dislike of something that lacks universal (or virtually universal) condemnation.

2. Toleration is, then, a value within limits, beyond which it turns into culpable indulgence; traditionally, limits to toleration have been devised in the self-defense of political order (John Locke 1685) and in considerations of harm to others (John Stuart Mill 1859).

The Difficulties of Toleration

From this standard definition, some problematic features of toleration can be easily detected: (1) its ambiguous meaning between the negative notion of "putting up with" and the positive one of "acceptance"; (2) its paradoxical nature: From a moral point of view, it is not clear why accepting or even putting up with practices that one finds objectionable and contrary to one's convictions is a good thing rather than moral weakness or hypocrisy; and (3) its problematic political value: Toleration may promote social peace, but is it also the right way for democratic regimes to deal with social differences? Is it sufficient for treating everyone as an equal citizen?

Perhaps toleration is an outdated ideal, no longer suitable for contemporary democracy, despite the persistence of intolerance.

As to negative versus positive toleration, toleration always means noninterference: What changes are the reasons supporting noninterference. If the reasons are simply prudential, then toleration is a compromise; if they are epistemological, the value of toleration is only instrumental and the original disapproval negatively affects the tolerated; in both cases, toleration carries a negative connotation. If, by contrast, the reasons for toleration lie in respect for persons, noninterference becomes positive: The principle of respect, being a superior moral principle, trumps the reasons for disapproval. In this situation, respect for others, based on the capacity of persons to decide for themselves, excludes that disapproval between moral partners and peers, unless the behavior is seriously harmful to others. In this way, respect also makes *reciprocal* toleration possible.

Finally, as to the political value of toleration within contemporary democracy, some considerations are in order that take us back to the history of the doctrine of toleration.

Political Toleration: From Absolutism to Democracy

The standard definition definitely applies to horizontal toleration, that is, toleration expressed between two social agents or parties within the social and moral community. May it apply to vertical toleration as well, that is, to the political dimension? Does political toleration include the judgment of the state in suspending an objection to certain practices for various reasons—for example, by the state's tolerating an unpopular group? Or is such judgment out of place for political authority? The answer depends on the type of state under consideration.

In an absolutist state, where the doctrine of toleration originated, the practice of toleration by the absolute monarch with reference to his or her subjects was patterned after the standard definition. As a response to religious pluralism engendered by the Reformation, the arguments for

toleration varied from the preference for peace over war, to the impossibility of forcing the true faith, but basically toleration was endorsed because it was more politically convenient and less costly than violent repression (John Locke 1685). When adopted, toleration was a matter of political expediency, dependent on the discretionary and gracious decision of the sovereign, not on justice. On the one side, there was the king or queen, the potential tolerator; on the other, there were the dissenters. The former as a rule judged deviant creeds as false and heretical and had the power to suppress it. Yet a monarch could become convinced that tolerance was a more convenient solution than a costly war; in such circumstances, toleration was precisely the suspension of the repressive power of the state, the absolute sovereign, for the sake of peace.

When the liberal state was established, though, toleration was transformed from an act of grace of the sovereign into the universal rights of liberty of citizens (Thomas Paine 1791). At that point, the absolutist political principle and the social virtue of toleration part ways. Before liberalism, the king had good reasons for noninterference; within liberalism, the state has a duty to tolerate, corresponding to the right of conscience of citizens. Moreover, toleration enlarges its scope: not just freedom from persecution, but equal liberty of conscience. In brief, the political principle of toleration establishes the state as the (relatively) neutral arbiter among the different views and opinions of its citizens, granting equal liberty for all.

Liberalism, however, has not miraculously produced a social harmony of all differences in terms of religion, morality, ways of life, and so on. Freedom of expression and association tend to nurture pluralism rather than uniformity—and pluralism cherished as a liberal value requires horizontal tolerance. If political tolerance grants individual liberty, social conformism may put pressure on individuals and curtail their effective freedom to choose for themselves. In his highly influential treatise *On Liberty*, John Stuart Mill (1859) stressed the new danger of oppression coming mainly from public opinion, from the tyranny of the majority. For this reason, horizontal toleration has become a crucial element for individual liberty to prosper, liberty that the state should protect.

Toleration and Contemporary Pluralism

The political principle of toleration prescribes institutional neutrality concerning the many differences of contemporary pluralism, and makes horizontal toleration a duty, within the boundary of the harm principle. It might seem that controversial issues of toleration, such as “hate speech,” are preempted or ignored and that only trivial interpersonal questions are bound to arise. But many controversies have proved otherwise, for instance, over the toleration or banning of Muslim girls’ wearing the traditional hijab scarf in French public schools, over the helmet for Sikhs, or over ritual animal slaughtering by Asian immigrants to the United States. Such political conflicts, resulting from contemporary cultural pluralism in our globalized world, have engendered a new attention to the theory of toleration. Within the contemporary debate on toleration, three strands of reflection can be identified: (1) philosophical works exploring the concept of toleration, its conditions, justifications, and limits, with the tools of advanced philosophical analysis; (2) political works in the liberal tradition, addressing toleration as the political principle allowing pluralism and liberal society to coexist; and (3) political studies advocating an extension of the meaning of toleration in positive terms.

The first two lines of inquiry revisit the traditional concept of toleration, both in its horizontal dimension, as social virtue, and in its political dimension, as a political principle. The third kind of works proposes a reinterpretation of toleration concerning why toleration is still a problem in democratic regimes and whether its meaning needs to change. This reinterpretation focuses (1) on cultural differences represented by groups that are marginalized, oppressed, or excluded from democratic society, typically immigrant groups or internal minorities and on why they are disliked by sectors of the majority; and (2) on the public spaces that should or should not be made available for these groups’ expressions of their cultural difference. Where, for instance, should Muslim-Belgian or Muslim-American citizens be permitted to enforce their own *sharia* law? In contemporary questions of toleration the issue is not the suppression of religious creeds and the repression of dissenters as in the times of Locke or Voltaire. Liberal toleration of religious freedoms and personal liberties is nowadays taken for granted in Western societies. Rather, in legal terms, the issue becomes one of the permissible “time, place, and manner” in which cultural differences may be publicly expressed. Few want to convert

Muslims to Christianity; yet many contend that Muslim symbols, be it the hijab or the mosque, should be confined to private areas instead of “invading” the symbolic landscape of Western societies.

Consequently, toleration comes to mean a spatial and symbolic enlargement of the liberal notion: from private to public space, and from negative to positive meaning. This revision of liberal toleration, also labeled “toleration as recognition,” aims at the legitimation of different practices and traditions belonging to minority groups in the public space, so as to reverse the public exclusion of their bearers. The public recognition of minority differences as legitimate options within liberal society does not imply any positive evaluation, let alone endorsement, of such differences but simply the removing of double standards according to which minorities are restricted in their freedom of expression in public while majorities have no such restriction. This more positive meaning of toleration moves, therefore, from mere noninterference with beliefs and private practices to public recognition and respect for cultural difference. Toleration expands in this way toward granting equal respect to all members of society, whether belonging to the majority or the minority.

Anna Elisabetta Galeotti

See also [Democratic Theory](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Ethnicity and Political Thought](#); [Freedom of Expression](#); [Liberalism](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Locke, John](#); [Mill, John Stuart](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Paine, Thomas](#); [Pluralism](#); [Progress](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [Tocqueville, Alexis de](#)

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Richard Lawrence Giles Richard Lawrence Giles

Tolstoy, Leo

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Tolstoy, Leo

Lev Nicolayevich Tolstoy was born September 9, 1828, at Yasnaya Polyana 120 miles south of Moscow, and died November 20, 1910, at the nearby railway station of Astapova. Already famous as a novelist, in the last 30 years of his life, he became equally famous as an ascetic and as a Christian anarchist, although he did not use those terms.

His vision is presaged in his diary for March 1855 as a “colossal thought”: “to establish a new religion, . . . the religion of Christ, but purified of belief in mysteries, a practical religion, one that does not promise a future bliss, but one that brings such harmony on earth.”

This task he undertook after a spiritual crisis recorded in *A Confession* (1879). Here he tells how the failure of science and metaphysics to give any reason or guidance for living almost drove him to suicide. Suicide was only avoided by the adoption of faith that “gives an infinite meaning to the finite existence of man.”

Obedience to God meant obedience to Christ’s teaching, especially that given in the Sermon on the Mount. Its essence was the “supreme law of love”; “supreme” because it is unconditional. To Tolstoy this law of love is not merely one virtue among many or some personal moral guide; the “increase in love” is the only basis for a “permanent revolution” in society.

Similar to his American contemporary, David Lipscomb (1831–1917), Tolstoy abjures politics. In Section 3 of *The Law of Love and the Law of Violence* (1908), he writes:

The essence of the mistake of all political doctrines, from the most conservative to the most advanced . . . lies in the fact that the people of this world . . . consider, that it is possible, through violence, to unite people in such a way that everyone submits, without resistance, to the same structure of life and guidance for conduct that results from it.

In *The Kingdom of God Is Within You* (1893), Tolstoy notes that communist and socialist reformers intend to carry government interference even further to regulate economics and private life. All reformers he writes are under the delusion that when a brutal and oppressive government is overturned, such violence and oppression will no longer be needed. In fact, Tolstoy argues, the rule of all revolutions is that the next regime is worse since it must continually defend itself from those it has overcome. In Tolstoy's view, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and Peter Kropotkin were right in everything but in their method of violent revolution. It was incomprehensible to Tolstoy that violence can make others behave the way we want them to.

The law of love outlaws force of all kinds. Thus, Tolstoy rejects the State (as a conspiracy founded on force to exploit and corrupt), the courts (that punish), the military (that kills), and the authority of "Church Christianity" (that "hypnotizes" the masses with colorful but irrelevant mysteries, miracles, and rituals). Tolstoy was excommunicated from the Russian Orthodox Church in 1902.

Tolstoy rejects the idea that not to resist evil is unnatural. No one, he says in *What I Believe* (1884), likes to see cruelty to animals let alone to humankind. The few leaders who direct mass killing in war do not themselves kill, but others, compelled by an oath of obedience, do the killing for them.

For Tolstoy the tragedy of the West is that it adopted a religion whose supreme law is love but kept its opposite, the pagan coercive political

structure, which society now considers absolutely necessary and inevitable. As a result, Christianity was corrupted by its service to the State and is now so far ossified that religion itself is being rejected along with the moral restraints that come with it. In this situation, coercion and violence, now aided by technology, can only get worse.

Tolstoy had long regarded private property in land as iniquitous and at the heart of the agrarian distress in Russia. To make land available to the peasants and to ensure that each stood in an identical relation to its advantages, Tolstoy eventually modified his strictures against the State to include the “single tax” teaching of the American social philosopher and economist, Henry George (1839–97). However, as he makes clear in his last novel, *Resurrection* (1899), rather than apply it to the nation as a whole, Tolstoy applied the “single tax” to the village commune. In *A Great Iniquity*, banned in Russia but published in *The Times* in London (1905), Tolstoy expresses his exasperation at the urban intelligentsia who seem prepared to adopt any political reform while denying “that which alone the Russian people require—the liberation of the land from private property [and] the establishment of equal rights on the land for all men.”

Tolstoy was prophetic. Arrested under the tsar, Tolstoyans continued to be arrested after the Bolshevik coup, either for refusing to take an oath to defend the State or for “not teaching in accordance with the government programs.”

However, Mohandas K. Gandhi, who had corresponded with Tolstoy in 1910, would apply his teaching successfully in campaigns of civil disobedience or *satyagraha* (“truth force”) against British rule in India.

Richard Lawrence Giles

See also [Anarchism](#); [Gandhi, Mohandas \(Mahatma\)](#); [George, Henry](#); [Kropotkin, Peter A.](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Property, Theories of](#); [Proudhon, Pierre-Joseph](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Russian Political Thought](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Technology and Political Thought](#); [Terrorism](#)

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Austin Harrington Austin Harrington

Tönnies, Ferdinand

Tönnies, Ferdinand

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Tönnies, Ferdinand

Ferdinand Tönnies (1855–1936) is considered one of three principal founders of the discipline of sociology at the end of the nineteenth century in Germany, alongside Max Weber and Georg Simmel. Born and educated in the German-Danish border region of North Frisia, near the city of Kiel, to which he maintained a lifelong connection as a professor there until 1916, Tönnies is celebrated chiefly today as the author of *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, first published in 1887 (translated into English as *Community and Society* in 1957).

Co-founder of the German Sociological Association in 1909 (and President of the Association in the 1920s), Tönnies originated a way of thinking about modern social and political change in terms of the disappearance of traditional “communal relations,” based on more or less continuous face-to-face interaction between family members and kin groups in close-knit agrarian and small-scale urban craftsmanship communities. These informal relationships came to be replaced by the rise of “societal relations,” based on more or less discontinuous, impersonal, abstract exchange relationships between individuals as providers of anonymous services and commodities. Echoing Henry Maine’s earlier distinction between “status” and “contract” as well as Lorenz von Stein’s theory of social class formation—and generally paralleling Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels’s analysis of capitalist wage labor contracts (without sharing their normative program)—Tönnies’s opus is the first major work of social commentary to define modern attitudes to life in terms of an experience of processes of functional

differentiation among interrelated components of social organization—a conception refined in the 1890s by authors such as Simmel, Weber, and Émile Durkheim and in the 1930s and thereafter by Talcott Parsons, his student Marion Levy, and others. After World War I, Tönnies's book spoke to a mood of industrial alienation and disarray, of moral disorientation and displacement, to a sense of the “desert of the asphalt,” and to a longing for escape from fragmented utilitarian orders of existence—a mood also captured by Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West* of 1918. The reality of life in modern times, Tönnies observed, was irreversibly one of separation of public and private spheres; of professionalization, functionalization, individualization, and bureaucratization; of rules of formal quantitative equivalence across all spheres of life; and of the predominance of forms of purposive-rational will (or *Kürwillen*, as Tönnies called it) over more substantial sources of social-ethical self-understanding. However, this condition, Tönnies insisted, was not necessarily to be denounced as one of unbearable vacuity and degeneracy. The ills of modern technological civilization could be addressed and mitigated by social and political reform, even if not abolished by it. Social democracy, as a project of rational administrative organization of market economies on the basis of equity, solidarity, and social justice, could rationally reconstruct values of community and collectivity for modern times.

Besides *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, Tönnies also published a number of other, rather neglected treatises in social and political analysis. Tönnies was the first to discover and edit Thomas Hobbes's *Elements of Law, Natural and Politic* of 1640 after a visit to the British Library in 1883, seeing in the thought of the English philosopher the rudiments of a sociological theory of the bases of national and international order—and one that Tönnies also believed could be reconciled in principle with more normative Kantian conceptions of freedom of the moral will. In 1897, Tönnies also published a study of the popularity of Friedrich Nietzsche as a European cultural and intellectual totem, and in 1922, in *Kritik der Öffentlichen Meinung*, Tönnies completed a wide-ranging examination of “public opinion” or “publicity” (*Öffentlichkeit*) in historical-sociological perspective as a possible horizon of realization for eighteenth-century Kantian ideas of the “free use of public reason,” defining public opinion as the regulating cognitive force in a world of *Gesellschaft* that takes the place

of religion in the world of *Gemeinschaft*. Remarkably, this work anticipates by some 40 years Jürgen Habermas's much better appreciated *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* of 1962.

Long an opponent of the paternalistic monarchical authoritarianism of the German Wilhelmine Empire, Tönnies passionately supported the Hamburg dock workers' strike of 1896–97, and although he succumbed to nationalistic statements at the outbreak of World War I (like many others of his milieu), he emerged during the Weimar Republic as one of the most outspoken champions of legal universalistic causes and of the legitimacy of the government of the Social Democrats in particular. After 1930, he was by far the loudest and most courageous of opponents of the Nazis among non-Jewish German bourgeois professorial figures of the period, publishing impassioned pleas on behalf of the German Social Democratic Party (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland*, SPD) throughout the events of 1932 and as late as February 1933 (aged 78) reading out a manuscript on freedom of speech at a meeting of socialist activists in Berlin that was broken up by the Nazi brownshirts.

Austin Harrington

See also [Alienation](#); [Civil Society](#); [Communitarianism and Liberalism](#); [Community](#); [Durkheim, Émile](#); [German Political Thought](#); [Guild Socialism](#); [Historicism](#); [Kautsky, Karl](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Mass Society](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Political Sociology](#); [Social Democracy](#); [Spengler, Oswald](#); [Weber, Max](#)

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Totalitarianism

Totalitarianism

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Totalitarianism

Totalitarianism is a term developed in the twentieth century to capture the essence of a new kind of political regime opposed to the pluralism of liberal democracy. The term was first used, in Italy, when applied to Benito Mussolini's fascism. After the end of World War II, which revealed the horrors of Nazism, and the start of the Cold War, which soon brought to prominence horrors under communism, the term was harnessed by both political theorists and political scientists for more general application. Although the predominant tendency is to synthesize a common concept from these various works, and certainly, there is agreement on some points, important disagreements remain. It is agreed that the general term—totalitarianism—applies to pervasively authoritarian regimes both of Left and Right and that it depicts a new phenomenon which has arisen only in modern times. Totalitarianism is viewed as crucially different from the autocratic rule (whether as tyranny, despotism, or absolutism) of earlier times and a phenomenon that could occur only after the rise of mass democracy and modern technology. Nazi Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union are generally viewed as the paramount examples, although there are differences in opinion over the other cases, if any, to which the term can be applied. This disagreement follows from the controversy over the precise meaning of the term, and it is a dispute that also has a bearing on contentions over the nature of terror and the purpose for which totalitarianism developed.

First Uses

The description “totalitarian system” (*sistema totalitaria*) was first used seven months after Mussolini’s March on Rome in October 1922 by a prominent opponent of fascism, Giovanni Amendola, when writing in the newspaper *Il Mondo*, in May 1923, in rejection of the proposed changes to the election laws. The changes, which became law later that year, gave two thirds of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies to the political party that received the largest share of the votes cast in a general election, if it received a minimum of 25 percent of the total number of votes cast. The claimed aim of the new law was to end coalition governments, but Amendola saw it as a fundamental attack on the representative system, an attack on legal opposition and on pluralist opinion. The term *totalitarian* was quickly taken up in various anti-Fascist publications: the word “totalitarianism” itself first appearing in print on January 2, 1924, in *La Rivoluzione liberale*. Under the penname Prometeo Filodemo (Prometheus People-lover), a young socialist, Lelio Basso, decried the “undifferentiated totalitarianism” under which the structures and institutions of the state—the monarchy, the parliament, the law, the armed forces—“are becoming instruments of a single party that makes itself interpreter of the people’s will.”

The turn from totalitarianism’s being used as a term of abuse came in 1925. In June of that year, Mussolini, in a speech delivered at the Fourth Congress of the Partito Nazionale Fascista, used the term not in criticism but in praise of the National Fascist Party’s “fierce totalitarian will.” Just two months previously, Giovanni Gentile, the Hegelian philosopher recruited to the Fascist Party in 1923 and generally viewed as the first philosopher of totalitarianism, had begun to spin the word. Gentile brought the State and individual will together, as one: In so doing, he squeezed out Hegel’s “civil society” and the family. In 1932, in “The Doctrine of Fascism,” published under Mussolini’s name in the *Encyclopedia italiana*, Gentile wrote of the “all-embracing” nature of the fascist conception of the State outside of which “no human or spiritual values can exist, much less have value,” and he added: “Thus understood, fascism is totalitarian.”

The irony of the term beginning life as a criticism of an antiliberal state and later being employed in praise of the all-embracing fascist state is matched by another irony. The case of Italy, rather than being accepted as a classic case, is at the heart of the contentions over the meaning and application of the general concept of totalitarianism.

Totalitarianism as a General Concept: Contending Positions

The contending views of totalitarianism essentially derive from a fundamental disagreement over whether totalitarianism is carried out through the state or from behind a state façade. These contrasting positions reflect the critical divide set by Hannah Arendt in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* ([1951] 1958), who takes the behind-state view, and Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski in *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* ([1956] 1965), who take the through-state view. Among those taking the through-state position, there is some contention over whether it is the dictator's leadership or the single mass party that should be given the greater emphasis. Of those stressing the party, one departs in viewing Jacobin rule in France, March 1793 to July 1794, as a case of "totalitarian democracy." Those taking the behind-state position take the view that totalitarian government differs not only from the tyrannies of earlier times but also from modern dictatorships of any kind.

Arendt and Friedrich and Brzezinski share the position that totalitarianism is an entirely new political form, a twentieth-century phenomenon for which modern technology and mass participation are indispensable. Although the two works are alike in taking Nazi Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union as the classic cases of totalitarianism, Arendt restricts her view of totalitarianism to these two cases; totalitarianism is the totalitarian regime, the last stage of "totalitarianism in power." Mussolini's Italy she rules out, arguing that Mussolini developed a totalitarian movement but never went to this last stage, being "contented" with "dictatorship and one-party rule": ruled, that is, through the state. Furthermore, her classification of "totalitarianism in power" applies only to Nazi Germany from November 1938, marked by *Kristallnacht*, and in the Soviet Union from 1929–30 to

1953. For Arendt, the Soviet Union was not a totalitarian regime under Lenin or during the entire period of the New Economic Policy (NEP, 1921–28), and she acknowledges the “detotalitarianization” that took place after Stalin’s death, in 1953. In contrast, Friedrich and Brzezinski apply their concept of totalitarian dictatorship far more widely. They include the USSR under Lenin, Nikita Khrushchev, and Leonid Brezhnev (and so, logically, through to the fall of communism), Italy under Mussolini, the countries of communist Eastern Europe, Communist China, Cuba under Fidel Castro, and Ghana under Kwame Nkrumah.

The Contrasting Characteristics of Totalitarianism

It is Friedrich and Brzezinski’s six-point “syndrome” of totalitarian dictatorship that is the most widely known. Its six features are as follows: (1) an ideology of a utopian kind for the whole of the world, which justifies the use of violence; (2) a “single mass party,” led by the “dictator”; (3) a system of terror (physical or psychological) through party and secret police, used to generate fear in both actual and potential dissenters, its purpose intimidation; (4) a monopoly of mass communications; (5) a monopoly of weapons; and (6) central control of the economy (state plans).

The purpose of this syndrome is both to delineate the mutually reinforcing characteristics of an entirely new kind of political system (all six points are required) and to provide a scientific definition to be used for comparative purposes. Friedrich and Brzezinski also offer some lessons for the development of totalitarianism; it is not a causal explanation but follows through the idea of a syndrome as an illness that develops in stages. Essentially their argument is that ideology, which produces violence, gives rise to a totalitarian movement that in turn gives rise to a totalitarian party, which, becoming increasingly bureaucratized, takes control of the government (state) and sets up a totalitarian dictatorship.

Arendt’s view of totalitarianism, which predates Friedrich and Brzezinski’s work, contrasts strongly with their image of totalitarian dictatorship. Her position is that the totalitarian regime is not dictatorship in the sense of

through the state: single mass party, bureaucracy, regular army, regular police and secret police, plans, and laws. Rather, “real power” lies not in the institutions and organizations of the state, which has only “ostensible power” but behind the state façade, with the secret police operating independently within a secret society, the whole system characterized by lawlessness. Arendt also emphasizes the “shapelessness” of the system: multiplied offices and duplicated functions, even “fake departments” in Germany; overlapping party, state, and soviets in the USSR; and purges destroying rational coordination.

Furthermore, for Arendt, totalitarianism is not an ideological movement, at least not one based on a wholly new ideology. Rather, existing ideas and beliefs are exploited: Marxism-Leninism, racism (to include modern anti-Semitism), Pan-Germanism, and Pan-Slavism. The whole system, in her view, is based not on the leader’s decisions put into operation by the party intertwined with the bureaucracy and the state coercive forces but on the “leader principle” in which the attraction of the leader is his “prophetic infallibility” based on “systematic lying.” Again, in contrast to Friedrich and Brzezinski, she rejects propaganda as part of the developed totalitarian system, although it plays a role in its development: In the early stage, propaganda together with organization is used in developing the totalitarian movement and in setting up the terror system. Once the totalitarian regime is begun (1938 in Germany and 1930 in the Soviet Union), propaganda is only used for external consumption so as to continue the fiction of a normal state.

Again, in sharp contrast to Friedrich and Brzezinski’s stress on planning, Arendt rejects any functional relationship between totalitarianism and the economy. In particular, concentration camps and labor camps are viewed as anti-utilitarian. Concentration camps are, at one and the same time, the microcosm of the perfect totalitarian society (the secrecy and the perfectly obedient mass under the total domination of the secret police) and the central organizational power of totalitarianism. The “leader principle” is not a dictatorship making people (through the state) do what they do not want to do but total domination over a mass society in which people have been stopped from thinking.

At the heart of these strikingly different views of totalitarianism are contending views of the nature and role of totalitarian terror. For Arendt, its primary purpose is not violence aimed at dissidents to create fear for the purpose of intimidation, as Friedrich and Brzezinski argue; for her, totalitarian terror is directed deliberately at innocent victims. Attacking innocents is the means through which spontaneity is destroyed and perfect obedience achieved, people being stopped from thinking for the purpose of “total domination.” In line with her emphasis on lawlessness, innocents are those attacked without provocation: Terror strikes against people possessing characteristics that no change in their behavior can affect.

Origins and Development

Again in contrast to Friedrich and Brzezinski’s perspective on totalitarianism as a syndrome that develops through set stages, Arendt adopts a comparative historical approach to the “origins of totalitarianism.” As her view of Mussolini’s Italy clearly demonstrates, totalitarianism is not inevitable: It was once in power that Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin set about creating the conditions for totalitarian terror, through propaganda and organization. In reflection of her view that existing ideologies are exploited in totalitarianism, the “origins” start from an analysis of the existence of the right kinds of themes to be exploited in the generation of the totalitarian movement. She picks out “race-thinking,” which, she argues, stems from imperialism and is a new development that differs from anti-Semitism, which has a far longer history. Race, substituting for nation, she argues to have been one of the two devices of imperialism used to rule over foreign peoples with the other being bureaucracy, as government not through law but through decree. The difference between race and nation in this imperialist thinking is argued to be politically significant because it undermined the ideas of citizenship within the nation-state that had developed in Europe throughout the nineteenth century. In the “continental” (rather than “foreign”) form that it took in Europe, imperialism both developed the ideas to justify the denial of rights to people within a country and identified the peoples to whom such rights could be denied. Lacking colonies abroad, Russia and Germany, with their respective Pan-Slavism and Pan-Germanism, looked for what she terms “colonies on the continent.”

The result of the growth of the nation-state, which, while developing citizenship rights for some denied them to others, was the growth of “stateless” people whose numbers, crucially, escalated as a consequence of World War I and the postwar treaties that drew artificial boundaries. Drawing on her two themes of imperialism and citizenship, Arendt argues that a political system historically structured around a strong bureaucratic state will be the one best suited to a totalitarian leader: In such circumstances, nationalism is encouraged and class loyalties discouraged. In this mass society, where class allegiances have been destroyed, isolated individuals, seeking to belong, are ready to be mobilized by a totalitarian leader.

Post-1991

During the era of the Cold War, it was primarily Friedrich and Brzezinski’s political-science view of totalitarian dictatorship that held ground, and the term *totalitarianism* was widely applied to singleparty states and most especially to communist regimes. Arendt’s view was judged to be too heavily drawn from the case of Nazi Germany and to have too easily rejected the importance of the economy. The scale of the deaths of the victims of the early totalitarian dictatorships that provided so important a part in the impetus to employ totalitarianism as a general term, relaxed into a greater stress on psychological terror and brainwashing. Important questions about the objectivity and utility of the term were raised after the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe in 1989 and in the Soviet Union in 1991, and some even dismissed the concept as obsolescent.

In particular, some analysts point to the ideological use of the term *totalitarian* by anticommunist governments and ideologues to make their own favored, right-wing authoritarian dictators—such as the Shah of Iran, the apartheid regime of South Africa, and Anastasio Somoza in Nicaragua—look less oppressive than communist dictators. These critics of the totalitarian paradigm also suggest a key difference between aspirations to total power and the inherent limits on the actual power of all regimes. They note the almost timid implosion of the allegedly totalitarian regimes of the former Soviet Bloc.

Moreover, fresh evidence has revealed a clearer picture of the significant differences between the Eastern European countries and governments in the Soviet Union before and after de-Stalinization, begun by Khrushchev in 1956. It may be that in being stretched to reflect changes and used for ideological purposes, the concept of totalitarianism played a part in the failure to foresee the fall of communism. Indeed, it was only the rare social scientist, notably cultural anthropologist Charles Erasmus (1984), uncompromised by connections of regimes or ideologies, who predicted and explained the collapse, marketization, and/or transformation of the communist regimes in the Soviet Union and China.

Since 1991, Arendt's position on totalitarianism has moved more to the fore. Although her account of the origins of totalitarianism is fixed in a particular era of European history, her concept remains valuable in gaining understanding of the nature of the arbitrary, terroristic government in Cambodia under Pol Pot, April 1975 to January 1979. In general, whenever the exercise of total domination is attempted through the destruction of human plurality and spontaneity in various forms of individual and group diversity of opinion and behavior, then the concept of totalitarianism can continue to provide insight.

Rosemary H. T. O'Kane

See also [Arendt, Hannah](#); [Bureaucracy](#); [Communism](#), [Varieties of](#); [Dictatorship of the Proletariat](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Empire and Political Thought](#); [Fascism](#); [French Revolution](#), [Political Thought of the](#); [Hayek, Friedrich von](#); [Ideology](#); [Lenin and Leninism](#); [Mao Zedong](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Mass Society](#); [National Socialism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Planning](#); [Power](#); [Progress](#); [Race and Racism](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Russian Revolution](#), [Political Thought of the](#); [Socialism](#); [Stalin and Stalinism](#); [State](#), [Theories of the](#); [Terrorism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [Utopianism](#)

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Trotsky, Leon

Lev Davidovich Bronstein (1874–1940), generally known by his adopted name Leon Trotsky, was one of the most romantic of Marxist revolutionaries, in part because of his compassionate identification as a youth with the workers on his father's estate. Trotsky was active in the 1905 Russian Revolution, and with Vladimir Ilych Lenin led the 1917 Revolution, was head of the Red Army, and became leader of the Left Opposition after the rise of Joseph Stalin, which led to his exile in Istanbul and Mexico City, where he was finally murdered by an agent of Stalin in 1940.

Trotsky was one of the most charismatic of revolutionary intellectuals in the twentieth century. There are two major phases in his thought. The first, early phase, up to 1917, is libertarian in content. Like Rosa Luxemburg, Trotsky before the 1917 Revolution believed that history was driven by the mass spontaneous energy of the masses. From 1917, when he joined forces with Lenin and the Bolsheviks, he viewed the Communist Party as the piston for which the proletarian masses provided the energy of steam. This way of thinking led to his later infamous motto, "my party, right or wrong"—a seed of the original, communist concept of political correctness, later appropriated with an ironic twist by conservatives.

The early Trotsky was a vehement critic of Lenin and the Bolsheviks, supporting the original soviets, or workers' and peasants' councils. After 1917, however, Trotsky became, in Lenin's words, the best of Bolsheviks,

authorizing the violent suppression of the Kronstadt mutiny, in which radical soldiers took their stand against the authoritarianism of the new Soviet regime and were slaughtered on Trotsky's command. The anti-Bolshevik Trotsky thus became ultra-Bolshevik after the Russian Revolution. From October 1917, he projected his personal identity onto the Revolution, from which his fate is no longer separable.

Trotsky's major works are many and varied. The theory of permanent revolution, pioneered by Alexander Parvus and Karl Kautsky but widely associated with Trotsky, spans the two main phases of his thought. First articulated in 1905, and elaborated in 1930, this theory indicates a double dialectic. First, according to Trotsky, the bourgeois revolution everywhere gives rise to the proletarian revolution. Second, all national revolutions develop into international revolutions. Trotsky was the greatest opponent of Stalin's slogan of "socialism in one country." Like other Bolsheviks, he insisted that the fate of the Russian Revolution depended on the success of the German Revolution, whose eventual success he presumed. Trotsky's thinking is animated by this kind of telos, whereby all roads lead to socialism. Yet he was also one of the most acute early critics of fascism.

Trotsky's thinking often contained contradictions. In 1920, for example, he published two books, *Terrorism and Communism* and *Literature and Revolution*. The first defended the militarization of labor, arguing in defense of coercion. The second waxed lyrical about the prospect of a new Faustian utopia in the Soviet Union, reconstructing both nature and human nature. *The Revolution Betrayed*, published in 1936, argued that the USSR was simultaneously an example of socialism (a workers' state) and a Stalinist betrayal of socialism. The Transitional Program of the Fourth International, 1938, simultaneously argues that the conditions for socialism are ripe and that the new Marxist party is the vital agent in the transition to socialism. The vital role of the vanguard party ran contrary to the inevitability of socialist revolution, Trotsky left two major legacies, which overlap. The first is intellectual. Many of the major Marxist thinkers and writers of the twentieth century followed Trotsky, both as a major historian and as an autobiographer and as a kind of halfway house for socialists in the face of Stalinism. Some, like Cornelius Castoriadis and Claude Lefort, broke with Marxist orthodoxy but remained radical. Others, like Christopher Hitchens,

became liberal or contrarian critics of Marxism. Yet others, like Isaac Deutscher, Ernest Mandel, Tariq Ali, and the founders of the *New Left Review*, remained more closely influenced by Trotsky's revolutionary Marxism.

The second legacy is organizational. Trotsky's broader influence extends through the various permutations of the Fourth International, some still influential, as with those that grew out of the International Socialists. Various Trotskyist groups have exerted influence in Latin America, Sri Lanka, much of Europe, and North America. Trotsky's revolutionary romanticism still attracts young radicals throughout the world. The aura of heroism and tragedy attached to his life and death remains, even if his politics remain connected to a world we have lost.

Peter Beilharz

See also [Fascism](#); [Kautsky, Karl](#); [Lenin and Leninism](#); [Luxemburg, Rosa](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Revolution](#); [Russian Political Thought](#); [Russian Revolution, Political Thought of the](#); [Stalin and Stalinism](#); [Terrorism](#); [Totalitarianism](#)

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Stephen Eric Bronner Stephen Eric Bronner

Twentieth-Century Political Thought

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Twentieth-Century Political Thought

New developments in political theory have marked the twentieth century. So many and so diverse are the thinkers, in fact, that their contributions make sense only with reference to particular traditions regarding questions of political authority and social inequality. These two ideas lost the kinds of justification that they had retained in times past. Advocates of liberalism contested the divinely based notions of authority, and of the unaccountable exercise of arbitrary political power, as part of a tradition whose roots reach back to the Enlightenment and John Locke. But the ascendance of these two critiques during what R. R. Palmer termed “the age of democratic revolution” from 1688 to 1789, and then in the international turbulence of 1848, was predicated primarily on establishing the rule of law and the creation of a “watchman state” that would benefit the expansion of capitalism. This dual assumption left issues of social and economic inequality untouched both for the broad masses of working people in Europe and for the victims of imperialism in the non-Western world.

Liberalism has always rested on universal principles, such as the rule of law, which privilege the rights of the individual against the state and the community. Critics view this slant as corrosive of what Niccolò Machiavelli originally termed “civic virtue” or the willingness to participate in the life of society. Communitarians have charged that liberalism also fails to value the historically situated allegiances of political life, especially in the case of threatened cultures like the Inuit. Works like Michael Walzer’s *Spheres of Justice* (1983) and Benjamin Barber’s *Strong Democracy* (1984) call for

invigorating democracy through voluntary associations, neighborhood involvement, and a new concern with educating citizens in the traditions of their community. Other communitarians such as Charles Taylor have deepened related discussions about multiculturalism and have provided new insights into the nature of solidarity and the self as well as into the role of religion in consolidating authentic connections among individuals. Some thinkers, such as Richard Rorty, have gone so far as to privilege “ethno-solidarity” and a “civilized indifference” to other cultures, arguably at the expense of cultural pluralism and cosmopolitanism.

Most liberals around the turn of the twentieth century were preoccupied with civil liberties, free trade, and a secular outlook. They had little to say about the second industrial revolution and the rise of a massive industrial proletariat. Figures like Herbert Spencer and William Graham Sumner promulgated competition and put a moral judgment on “the survival of the fittest.” Liberalism thereby turned into the ideology of the bourgeois gentleman. There were exceptions like T. H. Green. His *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation* (1895) insisted that liberty remained incomplete so long as it did not begin “hindering the hindrances of the good life.” But such appeals in theory to a more positive concept of liberty were mostly ignored in practice. Most European liberal parties became content to dispense with a mass base and serve as power brokers. Only in the United States were things different. *The Promise of American Life* ([1909] 1965), by Herbert Croly, arguably the leading theoretician of progressivism, incorporated the idea of state action into liberalism along with many demands originally raised by the socialist movement, foreshadowing the economic programs of the New Deal in the 1930s. This undertaking anticipated the later distinction drawn by Sir Isaiah Berlin between “negative” and “positive” liberty. Especially in the United States, the earlier preoccupation of liberalism with the free play of market forces gave way to policies designed to stimulate demand and provide a safety net for working people. Or, to put it another way, the old emphasis on purely formal, or negative, freedoms was balanced by a new concern with substantive equality.

In Europe, however, liberalism surrendered its revolutionary character after the Revolutions of 1848. Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century

liberals actually stood in uneasy alliance with a host of monarchical and dictatorial regimes. On the continent, the real-world successor to revolutionary liberalism was the socialist labor movement. It was inspired by a particular interpretation of the writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels that sought to link the creation of a liberal republic with the elimination of economic inequality. Social democracy became a mass movement with a proletarian mass base. But its leaders were unprepared for the outbreak of World War I and the new totalitarian communist and fascist movements that opposed more traditional understandings of political authority and social equality.

Transforming the World

Each of these new movements—socialism, communism, and fascism—would ultimately become a unique expression of a distinctly new form of mass politics, and each of them would seek to make good on the interests of different combinations of classes and groups. The two new totalitarian movements competed with each other vehemently in the aftermath of World War I, and each castigated the other in theory despite their similarities in practice. Each viewed itself as revolutionary and opposed social democracy and the liberal republic either with the communist “dictatorship of the proletariat” or the fascist vision of a homogeneous national/racial community. Indeed, the battle between social democracy and its liberal allies, on the one hand, and these two totalitarian movements was neither illusory nor superficial.

Socialism

The “scientific socialism” of Marx and Engels gripped the working class during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The theory was deterministic, positivistic, and teleological. But its claims appeared to correspond with reality. Everywhere in Europe, it seemed, an industrial proletariat was growing and organizing itself into the first democratic mass parties. Socialist theoreticians such as Karl Kautsky crystallized and popularized this vision of an international working-class movement on the rise with a politics that linked demands for economic reform with calls for

liberal republics to replace the monarchies then dominating Europe. In widely read works like *The Social Revolution* (1898) and *The Road to Power* (1909), Kautsky insisted that the “proletariat” would keep growing and bring about a new democratic revolution amid the crises and wars endemic to the capitalist system. Waiting confidently for the proletariat to become the great majority of society, and thus mitigate any future prospects of violence, revolution became the long-term goal justified by Marxist theory while reform in the shortterm marked the organizational practice of social democracy.

As the twentieth century began, however, Eduard Bernstein’s *The Preconditions of Socialism* ([1898] 1993) reached the conclusion that the proletariat was no longer growing. If democratic values were to be maintained, therefore, socialist activists would need to compromise with the political representatives of other classes and abandon guarantees of proletarian revolution. Socialism thus became an evolutionary enterprise based on the ethical commitment to bring about a liberal welfare state. But this argument of Bernstein’s was hotly debated. Rosa Luxemburg opposed such “revisionism” in *Reform and Revolution* (1898), and in various other works (Waters 1970), she offered new insights into the complexities of the mass strike as well as into imperialism and the authoritarian dangers of the Russian Revolution of 1917. Nevertheless, the attempt to justify reformist practice by revolutionary theory created bitter disillusionment and a sense of betrayal once socialist parties (now intent on becoming a “partner” in the capitalist/monarchist status quo) supported their respective governments with the outbreak of World War I.

Social democracy at its best was a libertarian movement of protest. None of its major figures would have questioned its commitments to economic justice, republicanism, and internationalism. They also believed that a new sensibility would mark what Oscar Wilde termed the “soul of man under socialism.” Technology used for the benefit of citizens offered a new world of leisure and contentment, which was portrayed by the best-selling utopian science fiction novel *Looking Backwards* ([1887] 1967) by Edward Bellamy, and the movement offered a new sense of dignity and purpose to the worker. Its members took seriously the democratic implications of the great phrase from Chapter 2 of *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), in which

Marx and Engels asserted that “the free development of each would serve as the condition for the free development of all.” The communists ultimately transformed this vision into its collectivist opposite during the 1930s by insisting that “the free development of all should serve as the condition for the free development of each.” This transposition crystallizes what is perhaps the most crucial difference between social democracy and communism. Leon Blum, the great leader of French social democracy, put the matter well when he spoke of a “moral incompatibility” between these two movements of the working class generated by the thought of Karl Marx.

Communism

Communism initially became widespread as a designation of political identity during the years preceding the Russian Revolution of 1917 when Lenin sought to differentiate his movement from social democracy. Already in his pamphlet *What Is To Be Done?* (1902), he insisted that if left to its own devices, the proletariat would always succumb to “economism.” Political consciousness therefore had to be injected into the working class from outside its ranks by a vanguard party of “professional revolutionary intellectuals.” In his view, the democratic mass party identified with European social democracy did not fit the conditions of an arch-reactionary and economically underdeveloped Russian Empire. He believed that a “party of a new type” was required with a centralized underground apparatus to overthrow the regime and bring about a bourgeois republic. If Lenin answered the organizational question regarding the prospects of revolution in a backward nation, however, it was Leon Trotsky who suggested that a “permanent revolution” might enable the working class to introduce its own form of governmental rule rather than remain content with the political form of its class enemy. The merger of these two ideas created the intellectual and practical foundations for bringing about the Russian Revolution with its slogan “all power to the soviets” and a party-stat embodying the “dictatorship of the proletariat.”

Utopian goals were generated in 1917–21 amid revolutionary turbulence in Europe and the shortlived attempts to create workers’ councils. Radicals in the communist movement such as Antonio Gramsci, Karl Korsch, and

György Lukács—also known as “Western Marxists”—called for abolishing alienation and the division of labor. Insisting on the fundamental connection between Marx and Hegel, they highlighted questions of class consciousness and cultural hegemony and envisioned the party’s aiding in the empowerment of the working class over its society. But such radicals constituted a minority within the movement, and with the failure of all European experiments in proletarian democracy, the Soviet Union was left as the only communist state. Once again worth noting is that the Bolshevik seizure of power was undertaken not in an economically developed capitalist nation with a large proletariat, as Marx and Engels had predicated, but in an economically backward nation that had barely moved beyond feudalism. Gramsci, indeed, termed the event “a revolution against *Das Kapital*.” That is precisely what made the communist organizational model so attractive to those engaged in anti-imperialist struggles. They played virtually no role in the conversation of theorists outside the socialist and communist traditions. Even now this topic remains marginal. *Imperialism* (1902), by John Hobson, the liberal socialist and teacher of John Maynard Keynes, argued that “parasitic” capitalist interests, unconcerned with the common good, fostered nationalism and militarism in order to achieve their imperialist ends. *Finance Capital* (1910), by the future Secretary of the Treasury in the Weimar Republic, Rudolf Hilferding, identified imperialism with the rising dominance of the banks over the capitalist system, while Rosa Luxemburg’s *The Accumulation of Capital* (1913) suggested that imperialism was endemic within capitalism—or, better, that capitalist nations required precapitalist territories to dump their goods and thereby create the incentive for reinvestment. Most famously, Lenin’s *Imperialism* (1918) saw “the last stage of capitalism” as having generated World War I, made possible the Russian Revolution, and shifted the potential for revolution from the Western proletariat to the colonized peoples.

The Soviet Union crystallized the problems facing non-Western and economically developed societies. Desperate measures were needed to industrialize the Soviet Union amid the rising fascist movements of the 1920s and to enable it to catch up with the West. Lacking an indigenous capitalist class, the party state wound up as the agent of modernization. As Lenin’s health declined before his death in 1924, Stalin took charge. Communism became identified with a party state in which terror, which

was initially directed only against explicit enemies of the revolution, was ultimately employed arbitrarily against everyday citizens. Thus, it was that the grand utopian experiment degenerated first into authoritarianism, then into totalitarianism, and after the death of Stalin in 1953, into a bureaucratic state lacking in revolutionary purpose and rotting from within—one that became subject to devastating criticism in a tradition of classic disutopian novels ranging from *We* (1921) by Yevgeny Zamyatin to *Animal Farm* (1940) by George Orwell and *The Trial Begins* (1960) by Andrei Sinyavsky.

Fascism

World War I was a “total war” that spawned fascism as well as communism. Both understood the outcome as a product of betrayal. Lenin and his comrades saw social democrats, imperialists, liberals, and remnants of the old order as the culprits who had led the working class to the slaughter. For the nascent fascist movements throughout Europe, it was the “defeatists” who now supported the liberal republics of the 1920s that had denied their nations the fruits of victory whether through what the Nazis termed a “stab in the back” or some other cowardly plots. Fascists everywhere fused xenophobia, and ultimately racism, with imperialist ambitions in an intractable one-party state. They, too, forged their own tradition of political theory. Various thinkers who anticipated fascism, such as Maurice Barrès, Charles Maurras, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, Eugen Dühring, and Richard Wagner, sought to obliterate the Enlightenment legacy of reason and inspire the masses with discipline and vitality, chauvinism, and racism, with an eye on exterminating what they considered the nation’s enemies: traditional liberals and conservatives, socialists and communists, and Freemasons and Jews.

Carl Schmitt, who shifted from being a conservative to a Nazi, understood authority as constantly under siege by “partisan” political enemies. According to his *The Concept of the Political* (1932), therefore, it must always mobilize “friend against foe.” This idea is seen as the foundation for all political thinking. Politics is not war by other means; rather, it employs the same means. Security cannot be achieved without action that may intrude on civil liberties—a necessary and justifiable compromise between the particular interests of citizens and the health of the state. The “will” of

citizens becomes manifest in the state, and the sovereign, or he who decides, manifests its ability to act in the world. The sovereign's ability to make a decision must subsequently remain unencumbered by checks and balances or any moral postulates associated with the liberal rule of law.

Fascism was an international phenomenon that achieved prominence in Austria, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Spain, and various other nations. Its parties were mass-based rather than mere puppets of big business or cliques of disaffected individuals. Its leaders, like Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler, were as intent on changing the world as Lenin or Trotsky. Fascists and their forerunners justified violence by insisting on the existence of a mythical national or racial conflict that often had its roots in the beginnings of civilization. Enlightenment rationality, liberalism, and Marxism denied or obscured the need for national or racial solidarity and what fascists considered the need for exercising arbitrary power in rooting out the enemy. Whatever their claims to the contrary, like the communists, fascists also had a military vision of the political party, relied on a “cult of the personality,” and ruled through a mixture of propaganda and terror. They, too, identified the party with the state and sought a rigid form of “coordination” (*Gleichschaltung*) that would unify all institutions under a single command. Both communists and fascists used masses to exterminate masses. The ideological inspirations for the two movements, their political theories, were surely different. Their members died fighting one another in the streets and, later, on the battlefields. But the political structure of their party organizations, their police states, and their styles—their paranoia, their music, their uniforms, their parades, their conventions—were remarkably similar.

The Totalitarian Temptation

Communism and fascism challenged the style of the old order. Neither had any use for its pragmatism, its humanism, and perhaps above all—ironically—its understanding of historical change. The totalitarians brought a new vitality to bear against their older rivals. Neither communism nor fascism had any use for universal ethical values or an “agent” of revolutionary change constrained by history. It is true, of course, that many of the worst crimes perpetrated by the communists were justified by reference to

“historical necessity,” and the Führer always spoke of “destiny.” With respect to communism, however, “necessity” was actually never anything more than an excuse, while for fascism, “destiny” was only what the leader wanted it to be. These movements in their most radical phases, and with respect to their most radical policies, never exhibited a sense of the way reality and ordinary morality might limit their secular-chiliastic ambitions and goals. Their leaders believed that, despite tactical retreats and opportunistic compromises, they could bend history to their will—and whether justified through teleology or a racial apocalypse, it only made sense that the masses should pay the price.

The Flight From Practice

Establishmentarian political theory saw ideologically motivated mass movements as the source of totalitarianism. Its liberal wing subsequently sought to highlight the need for a more rigorous and scientifically grounded understanding of politics while conservatives called for rehabilitating the canon to condemn the excesses of modernity. The focus was less on social justice than on individual liberty on the one hand and far more on interpreting the text than on analyzing the context on the other. The former stance can be understood as an offshoot of positivism, which essentially involves applying methods of the natural sciences to society, while the latter insisted on the continuity of concepts and ideas or, better, a narrow traditionalism. Both wings of establishmentarian-thinking liberals were suspicious of bureaucratic mass society as well as all systematic philosophical approaches to making sense of it. They both insisted that what would later be called “grand narratives” tended to become ideological props for mass movements, authoritarian parties, and overweening states. Interpreting the sources of political conflict and the imbalances of social power became even less of a priority. The study of politics was seen as requiring either scientific neutrality or intellectual contemplation. Thus, political theory sundered its connection with practice.

The Open Society

A new positivistic outlook subjected all forms of historicism, idealism, collectivism, and utopianism to withering criticism. Sir Karl Popper's *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1950) found the rudimentary assumptions of the "closed society" in Plato and argued that they had been carried into the present through the pseudo-democratic radicalism—or in J. L. Talmon's phrase, "totalitarian democracy"—of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and, most crucially, the dialectical theories of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Marx. Works like *The Road to Serfdom* (1944), by Friedrich von Hayek, maintained that any form of state intervention compromised freedom and dignity, while Sir Isaiah Berlin's *Two Concepts of Liberty* (1958) juxtaposed attempts to impose communal understandings of freedom—or "positive" liberty—against the free exercise of conscience embodied in the liberal and antistatist notion of "negative liberty." Mainstream political "scientists" arguing their own brand of "pluralism" such as David Truman and Robert Dahl warned against privileging participation over order and seemed to justify apathy. At the beginning of the 1960s, it was popular to speak about what Daniel Bell termed "the end of ideology" and a new emphasis was placed on turning normative ideological questions into problems of public administration.

The value-free and supposedly nonideological presuppositions of social scientific reasoning, its pragmatic and "falsifiable" character, appeared to offer a sharp rebuke not only to the metaphysical dogmas of totalitarianism but also, by extension, to all normative theory. Some thinkers, such as the Canadian Christian Bay, criticized the attempt to limit political theorizing to the domain of what is testable by the methods of the natural sciences. They castigated positivists and behaviorists for refusing to deal with the basic speculative questions or the exploitation inherited from the past. They deplored the reduction of politics to a set of techniques and the way in which establishmentarian values crept into supposedly scientific research. Various political theorists concerned with reinvigorating democracy and the grievances of the "new social movements" contested the acceptance of civic apathy. But they were mostly on the outside looking in. Political "science" increasingly drew a sharp division between those who analyzed power and those who judged it.

Preserving the Canon

Fear of institutional manipulation and the abrogation of civic responsibility were widely shared concerns of those resisting the new scientism. It was also a matter of saving the canon of political theory from the incursion of modernity. Leo Strauss and his followers highlighted the ongoing “conversation” between magisterial authors—the “great men” of political theory—who comprise what amounts to a predetermined “canon” of political theory beyond time and space. Such a stance is predicated on the belief in what Karl Jaspers, the mentor of Leo Strauss, termed a “perennial philosophy” whose “traces” or “ciphers” (*Chiffren*) are in need of continual reinterpretation even though they manifest themselves in the great works of every civilization and unite them. Here a classical bias is evident from the start: The future always, and ineluctably, lies in the past. Leftist critics charge that insular approaches of this sort banish history and material interests in favor of imaginative reconstructions of texts. In the process, however, they consign political theory to a museum of the mind. The classics are insulated from the mob and, in culinary fashion, readied for the next Talmudic exegesis by yet another academic “aristocrat” or connoisseur.

In *What Is Political Philosophy?* (1959), Strauss called on political theorists to deal with classic texts less in terms of the relative truth or historical value they represent than as expressions of truth as such. He also viewed the entry of the secular, the critique of the transcendent, as a source of degeneration. Strauss abhorred the decline in “liberal education,” by which he meant education in a preestablished Western canon, and the increasing refusal to recognize the “authoritative” voices of the Western political tradition. The latter he saw as undermined by the relativizing tendencies of mass culture and mass education. Philosophy is essential for the breeding of a “gentleman,” according to Strauss, and conservative political theory must divorce itself from civic concerns to create and preserve an intellectual “aristocracy within mass society.”

Others took a different view. In widely read works such as *The Human Condition* (1958) and *On Revolution* (1963), Hannah Arendt looked back longingly to the polis, the town meeting, and even the workers’ council or democratic soviet. Her aim was to preserve politics from bureaucratic corruption and instrumental definition by highlighting the importance of participation by citizens. Yet she never confronted the concrete problems

associated with decentralization, such as the coordination of interests, patronage, provincialism, or the impact of markets. Her philosophical response to history was to identify politics with “speech” and a “self-exhibition” among equals in a public forum. “Real” politics thus became identified less with mass movements and institutional imbalances of power than with the ideal of participatory democracy with an eye on the polis, the soviet, or states’ rights. From this perspective, liberalism and nationalism, as well as Marxism and fascism, appear as “anti-political.” In *Politics and Vision* (1960), Sheldon Wolin condemned all four of these ideologies for their collusion with the state, their antiparticipatory character, and their suspension of what is “general and integrative to men, a life of common involvements.”

Metaphysics and Politics

From the first, Jürgen Habermas privileged the role of rational discourse for genuine democracy and, later, as a corrective to chauvinistic emotions, a form of “constitutional patriotism.” His first book, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* ([1962] 1989), highlighted the role of a public sphere that would protect the individual from the state and allow grievances to be aired. *Knowledge and Human Interest* ([1968] 1971), his next major work, maintained that all social knowledge was informed by a “generalizable interest” that would become apparent insofar as communication was “undistorted” by self-interest, propaganda, and imbalances of power. Such communication assumes an egalitarian recognition of others, a willingness to justify positions in a rational spirit based on good will, and an implicit commitment to ultimately accept the better argument beyond any specific set of material or instrumental interests. Habermas’s work highlights the vision of a public realm predicated on the unfettered exchange of ideas as well as on a healthy respect for the intelligence and moral capacity of everyday citizens.

In a somewhat different manner, John Rawls’s immensely influential *A Theory of Justice* (1971) set intuitively attractive notions of social justice in a framework of rational consent whose validity no supposedly reasonable person could conceivably reject. The foundation for this enterprise was the hypothetical “original position” in which individuals are stripped of their

material interests, history, and personal values to illuminate the moral values any self-interested person would accept. This logic is not dissimilar to what Thomas Hobbes employed in viewing a universal interest in survival as the precondition for the pursuit of all other interests. For Rawls, however, the result is a maxim whereby social policy is judged in terms of whether it favors the least advantaged member of society. In the “original position,” where each is cloaked by a “veil of ignorance” and no one knows what social situation he or she occupies, it would seem a matter of prudent self-interest for each to embrace this maxim. The “difference principle” subsequently assumes that any social and economic inequalities are arranged so that they can be expected to help all, with positions and offices open to all. The utilitarian self-interest in security becomes bound with the commitment to reciprocity on which ethical rationalism is founded. The result is a stance that identifies justice with fairness.

But the argument is built on a hypothetical form of judgment that is ultimately rooted in the liberal understanding of the social contract. There, too, an abstract judgment generated by self-interest (“rightly understood”) is rendered by individuals essentially stripped of their empirical characteristics. As far as justice is concerned, Rawls himself conceded in his next major work, *Political Liberalism* (1993), that the notion of justice as fairness is unrealistic. Disagreements over what defines social justice, the public good, and the character of morality are only natural given the number of reasonable, yet incompatible, competing doctrines. In this new work, therefore, Rawls attempts to identify the “ideal of public reason” with a stance whereby the claims as well as the rights and duties of citizens might be determined. An “overlapping consensus” defines what is common to all even as differences are preserved. Here, too, he insists that the foundation for a legitimate ordering of society rests on principles that no reasonable person can reject. Unfortunately, however, the same tautology presents itself: Liberal society presupposes the existence of liberal individuals. Nothing can be said about those who hold what have been termed “illiberal” views and interests. Ultimately, indeed, Rawls philosophically confronts this problem in his unfinished work, *The Law of Peoples* (1999), where he notes that in international relations, it is less a matter of any given people being “liberal” than being “decent.” But there is an extent to which this entire discussion rests on semantics. The argument

rests on intuitively generated ideal types that are immune from any historically critical assessments or conflicting interests regarding the character of decency. There is no consideration of how imbalances of institutional or international power are constituted. Little concern is given to social solidarity or a theory of resistance. It is enough to render the politics intelligible through metaphysics.

New Reactions

World War II and the shock of Auschwitz and the Gulag produced a new concern with critical reflection on modern bureaucratic social structures and the exercise of individuality. Totalitarianism and the emergence of an authoritarian personality, preoccupied with “obeying orders,” produced a new critique of accepted categories and assumptions as well as the responsibility to uncover the totalitarian and barbaric roots of modernity. This extended to the experiences of colonial subjects under imperialism as well as the palpable need to confront anti-Semitism along with racism, sexism, and homophobia. Critical theory, existentialism, and poststructuralism all served to confront the old justifications for imperialism and prejudice. Each after its fashion was deeply skeptical about metaphysics with its universal ambitions, foundational claims, and unexamined biases that supported existing structures of power. These new approaches also crystallized mostly unacknowledged forms of alienation, mistrust of cultural authority, as well as the integration of the revolutionary proletariat and the passing of historical agency. Intractable tensions between humanity and its works became a prominent theme along with a new emphasis on subjectivity as the radical response to totalitarianism and what would later become a conservative backlash.

Critical Theory

Confronting “traditional” theory in both its positivist and metaphysical forms required a new conceptual framework: “Critical” theory supplied it. Associated with what became known as the “Frankfurt school,” the term was first coined in 1937 by Max Horkheimer while he and most of his colleagues were in exile in the United States. Two of his seminal essays

explained the unique character of his approach: “Traditional and Critical Theory” and “Materialism and Metaphysics.” Horkheimer insisted that critical theory should be understood neither as a philosophical system nor as a fixed set of proscriptions. He instead viewed it as a method of liberation, a cluster of themes or concerns that would express an explicit interest in the abolition of social injustice and the psychological, cultural, and political reasons why the international proletarian uprisings failed after the events of 1917 in Russia. Works like these set the stage for a new mode of “dialectical” thinking—a version of Marxism that went beyond economic determinism to deal with totalitarianism, the failure of the proletarian revolution, and mass society in an interdisciplinary manner.

Most notable in this regard was *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944), written by Horkheimer and his stalwart and brilliantly multifaceted friend Theodor W. Adorno. This work questioned the virtues of progress, science, and modernity. It maintained that by privileging mathematical reason, the Enlightenment not only assaulted reactionary forms of religious dogma but also, whether intentionally or unintentionally, critical reflection. Capitalism with its attendant employment of scientific rationality and bureaucracy was seen as stripping the individual of both conscience and spontaneity ultimately culminating in the number tattooed on the arm of the concentration camp inmate. Stalinism on the left, Nazism on the right, and an increasingly bureaucratic and robotic mass society emerging in the United States had also seemingly eradicated the prospect of revolutionary transformation. Buttressed by a “culture industry,” which always targets the lowest common denominator for its products, opposition becomes just another commodity while critical thinking and genuine subjectivity are imperiled. Not the philosopher or the political revolutionary but the bohemian intellectual, who challenged society in its entirety, now embodied whatever liberating hopes existed for the future.

But modernity and the eighteenth-century Enlightenment were not the only culprits. Civilization itself had rendered genuine individuality problematic from its beginnings: Ulysses was already forced to hide his identity in order to survive. *Dialectic of Enlightenment* thus introduced an anthropological perspective to highlight the demand for conformity and the subversion of subjectivity. Politics thus made way for a philosophico-aesthetic assertion

of critical reflection in *Negative Dialectics* ([1966] 1973) and *Aesthetic Theory* ([1970] 1997), two monumental works by Adorno, while Horkheimer emphasized a philosophical-religious understanding of resistance in *The Longing for the Totally Other* (1970). Thus, critical theory sought to combat the collectivist strains within advanced industrial society by infusing historical materialism with a new emphasis on the role of subjectivity.

Existentialism and Identity

Still, it was existentialism that truly marked the culture of the postwar era. With their emphasis on authenticity, personal responsibility, and solidarity, Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Simone de Beauvoir became intellectual superstars. Their concern with individuality and facing the “absurd” (an existence without predetermined meaning) fit a time defined by what was known as the “concentration camp universe.” In literary works like *Caligula* ([1944] 1958) and *The Plague* ([1947] 1948), and his major foray into political theory, *The Rebel* ([1951] 1954), Albert Camus confronted the terror justified by the utopian ambitions of totalitarian regimes through articulating the ethical limits on action and the importance of exhibiting a plausible connection between means and ends. As for Sartre and de Beauvoir, they sided (for a time) with the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Nevertheless, their insistence on taking responsibility for one’s situation and personal authenticity also led them to anticipate what would become a new emphasis on identity.

Sartre led the way with *Anti-Semite and Jew* (1948) and his great existential biography of the gay writer Jean Genet, while Simone de Beauvoir intellectually launched the modern women’s liberation movement with *The Second Sex* ([1952] 1953). Inspired by such works, later studies by Carole Pateman, in *The Sexual Contract* (1988), and by Charles Mills, in *The Racial Contract* (1997), made clear how the most basic assumptions of liberal society ignored these marginalized groups. So it was that both the intellectually radical perspective of W. E. B. Du Bois and the confrontational approach of Martin Luther King, Jr., faulted U.S. institutions for failing to live up to their own liberal and egalitarian promises. Likewise, after co-founding second-wave feminism in the 1960s,

Betty Friedan found herself both praised and criticized by an assortment of radical feminists, socialist feminists, eco-feminists, feminists of color, and eventually, third-wave and, as the twentieth century gave way to the twenty-first, even fourth-wave feminists. Conflicts with more conventional views on American history and society provoked by advocates of identity politics of such “new social movements” culminated in “the culture wars” of the 1980s and beyond.

Worth noting also is how Sartre’s *Critique of Dialectical Reason* ([1958] 1976) anticipated many of the political themes of the 1960s while a host of his essays and interviews helped legitimate anti-imperialist resistance movements—and their intellectuals—as well as various dictatorial third-world regimes. In a similar vein, Frankfurt School critical theorist Herbert Marcuse’s *One-Dimensional Man* (1964) pointed to the role of “marginal groups”—intellectuals, women, people of color—as new sources of resistance in advanced industrial society, while *An Essay on Liberation* ([1968] 1969) highlighted the utopian ideals associated with the cultural transformation of everyday life and traditional notions of sexuality.

Overlapping with, but going beyond, issues of race, ethnicity, and gender was the emergence of an interrelated set of postmodernist and poststructuralist tendencies to challenge universals, absolutes, and more specifically, the values and perspectives of Eurocentric, linear, and patriarchal thinking. Postmodernism is an elastic concept that rejects grand narratives and the idea of philosophical foundations. It reflects a world defined by the commodity in which qualitative differences between phenomena have seemingly been obliterated. Whether the most important postmodernists actually contest this “condition” is debatable. But the deconstructive ambitions of its more radical thinkers like Jacques Derrida or Michel Foucault are indisputable. Especially in Foucault’s works like *Madness and Civilization* ([1961] 1965) and *Discipline and Punish* ([1975] 1977), an assault on the power of institutions and linguistic practices becomes evident. It is difficult to speak of a postmodernist or even poststructuralist “school” since the point of this entire enterprise is to highlight the particular. Still, these value-relativizing intellectual trends had important, liberating political implications. Gender, ethnicity, power, violence, and justice were used as analytical tools to question the

epistemology, ontology, and political legitimacy of prevailing modes of thought and structures of power and control.

Conservatism and Neoconservatism

Conservatives were aghast at these developments. Their outlook had always rested on the desire to maintain what has been in the face of what will be. It inherently evinces a commitment to conserve the complex of customs and habits handed down from generation to generation. Conservatism is therefore predicated on both political and cultural assumptions but perhaps less on explicit philosophical principles than what Michael Oakeshott termed in his classic essay “On Being Conservative” (1991) a disposition for pursuing a certain form of conduct. It is a matter of preferring the familiar to the unknown and the lessons of experience to the demands of metaphysics. Change is considered inherently destructive of authority, and if only for this reason, conservatives must logically seek to mitigate it, if possible, and assimilate the new as quickly and painlessly, if necessary. This makes it possible, at least in principle, for conservatives to adapt to any change, to condemn all forms of “prejudice,” and to identify themselves with the interests of minority ethnic groups. As the twentieth century came to an end, however, a new group of “neoconservatives” began their counterattack on the legacy of the 1930s. Journals like *The Public Interest*, formerly edited by Irving Kristol—also known as “the godfather”—and *Commentary*, formerly edited by Norman Podhoretz, framed their general outlook on issues ranging from the need for new censorship laws and the importance of reasserting the capitalist ethos, to the lack of anticommunist vigor on the part of Albert Camus and George Orwell and the importance of combating the “adversary culture” of the 1960s. Neoconservatism was not simply preoccupied with resisting change in the name of some cultural disposition to maintain the status quo. Its advocates were instead proactive in the sense that they sought a radical transformation of American society. Theirs was an attempt to extend anticommunism into antisocialism and then antisocialism into antiliberalism in an attempt to

1. a. give “government” back to the people by attacking “bureaucrats” and “politicians”

2. b. dismantle the welfare state while calling for increased military expenditures
3. c. proclaim the virtues of a new nationalism while combating reforms demanded by “special interests” like women, unions, and minorities
4. d. defend traditional values like “family” and “religion” against the incursions of secular education and the liberal state

Neoconservatives (with conservative support) insisted on a strong executive, security over civil liberties, and the exercise of unilateral actions like the “preemptive strike” in foreign affairs. A particularly influential example of neoconservative thinking is the 1992 Wolfowitz Doctrine (of defense analyst Paul Wolfowitz) that later morphed into the Bush Doctrine used to justify the “preemptive strike” and the “preventive invasion” of Iraq. Neoconservative assumptions about foreign policy are simple: The unassailable superiority of American values makes their extension throughout the world necessary, even if this means ignoring international organizations and insisting on the right to intervene unilaterally whenever and wherever the government believes it must.

The Future of Political Theory

The prospects for new political theorizing in the twenty-first century are both promising and troubling. In recent decades, democracy has emerged as foremost on the agenda of many progressives in Latin America and much of the Third World. The “Arab Spring” is a case in point and so is, in the West, Occupy Wall Street and the great anti-austerity protests in southern Europe of 2012. But its substance, if not necessarily its republican form, remains a subject of debate. New movements are dealing with structural imbalances of political power, deepening class divisions and poverty, religious conflict, prejudice, and the disenfranchisement of minorities. Political theory should not stand on the sidelines. Innovative and cosmopolitan approaches, which recognize and integrate the contributions of non-Western thinkers, are also required to meet the demands of an increasingly global community. Of course, figures like Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela are lionized. But too little attention has been paid to Aimé Césaire’s *Discourse on Colonialism* (1955), Albert Memmi’s *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (1957), and Frantz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963).

Environmental challenges, intractable wars, immigration and a global economy, ethnic tensions, and an always looming clash of civilizations all call for a new planetary politics and new ways of thinking about public policy. Political theorists of all stripes will thus need to interpret not merely the canon but also what many still consider radical or exotic approaches in ways appropriate to new political situations and with sensitivity to the way in which an increasingly diverse set of traditions manifest what Ernst Bloch termed an “anticipatory consciousness” linked to the aspirations of the disenfranchised and the exploited.

Stephen Eric Bronner

See also [Authority](#); [Bellamy, Edward](#); [Berlin, Isaiah](#); [Bernstein, Eduard](#); [Capitalism](#); [Class](#); [Communism, Varieties of](#); [Communitarianism and Liberalism](#); [Critical Theory](#); [Democratic Theory](#); [Dictatorship of the Proletariat](#); [Empire and Political Thought](#); [Equality and Egalitarianism](#); [Ethnicity and Political Thought](#); [Fanon, Frantz](#); [Fascism](#); [Feminism](#); [Foucault, Michel](#); [Frankfurt School](#); [Gandhi, Mohandas \(Mahatma\)](#); [Gramsci, Antonio](#); [Habermas, Jürgen](#); [Hayek, Friedrich](#); [Hobson, John Atkinson](#); [Humanitarian Intervention](#); [Ideology](#); [Kautsky, Karl](#); [Lenin and Leninism](#); [Liberalism](#); [Libertarianism](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Luxemburg, Rosa](#); [Marcuse, Herbert](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Mass Society](#); [Modernization](#); [National Socialism](#); [Nationalism](#); [Neoconservatism](#); [Neoliberalism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Oakeshott, Michael](#); [Orwell, George](#); [Popper, Karl](#); [Positivism](#); [Postmodernism and Political Theory](#); [Race and Racism](#); [Rawls, John](#); [Republicanism](#); [Revolution](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Rule of Law](#); [Russian Revolution, Political Thought of the](#); [Sartre, Jean-Paul](#); [Schmitt, Carl](#); [Social Democracy](#); [Socialism](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Strauss, Leo](#); [Totalitarianism](#); [Trotsky, Leon](#); [Utopianism](#); [Welfare State, Theories of the](#)

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United Nations, Theories Of The

The United Nations (UN) is an international organization of 193 member states committed to the cooperative maintenance of international peace and security, and to economic, social, cultural, and humanitarian cooperation. The 193 member states seek to achieve these goals through an agreed-to set of restrictions, responsibilities, and mutual obligations as outlined in the 111 Articles of the UN Charter. The history of the UN is not, however, an easy story of achieving these goals. Instead, the UN is a complicated organization of some successes and some failures. UN scholars utilize theory for two primary purposes: to better understand the past and to make credible predictions about the future. A theory provides a specific platform from which to view the past and to look into the future, and for any given topic there can be multiple, and sometimes competing, ideas about which theory affords the most useful viewing platform. The UN defies easy theoretical explanation and is the subject of multiple and often competing theories. As a result, most UN studies shy away from theoretical explanation and are generally empirical and policy oriented; attempts to apply a single explanatory theory to the UN constitutes an eternal (theoretical) reinvention of the wheel. However, an examination of these multiple and often competing theories helps us better understand the limits and potential of the UN to meet its Chartered goals.

Realism and Liberalism at the UN

There are two primary intellectual frameworks in which to consider the UN: realism (concerned primarily with the concepts of power recognition, statehood, and sovereignty) and liberalism (concerned with cooperation and institutional agency).

Realism is generally regarded as the dominant theoretical perspective in international relations and encapsulates assumptions about humanity's propensity for self-interested action above any other consideration, power as the end-all concept in international affairs, and the dominance of the state as a primary and rational actor. Realism can be differentiated into distinct categories including classical realism and structural realism. Classical realists assume that the laws of human behavior are rooted in unchanging human nature and rooted in a person's desire to maximize his or her security. Classical realists such as E. H. Carr argue that the behavior of states reflect this core human condition. However, structural realists, such as Kenneth Waltz, argue that the classical realist concept of human nature is, at best, problematic inasmuch as human behavior is never purely good or purely evil but is instead a complicated mixture of self-interest and altruism. Instead, structural realists look to remove realism from the idea of human nature and relocate it as a purely structural and state-based phenomenon. In terms of realism as a suitable explanatory theory for the UN, it is easy to point to the prevalence of power politics and state-ism at the UN. Indeed, cooperation and institutional agency seems only to exist in the absence of any compromise to member states' sovereign interests. In many ways, the UN points to some obvious realist rhetoric: Classical realists would explain UN behavior as being entirely dependent on the selfish nature of member states who seek only to serve their own interests; structural realists would observe that the existence of cooperation at the UN can be explained from a state-centric perspective in terms of states striving to improve the quality of life and security for their citizens through the avenues offered by cooperation. However, for all the questions that realism is able to answer, there are an equal number left unanswered. If states are interested only in their own relative power and security why are states so often willing to engage in processes and decisions at the UN that are seemingly entirely altruistic and indeed often mitigate their power?

Liberalism is often presented as the primary theoretical competitor to realism. Liberalism is based on what Robert Keohane describes as a faith “in at least the possibility of cumulative progress” (Keohane 1990, 174). Philosophical versions of liberalism can be traced back to Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) and the emergence of the concept of international community. The Enlightenment thinking of philosophers such as Baron de Montesquieu (1689–1755), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78), and Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) similarly challenged the concept of absolute sovereignty that had been fastened into practice by the Treaty of Westphalia. Rousseau later developed the idea of the social contract, wherein the only way in which humanity can be preserved and can progress is by “uniting their separate powers in a combination strong enough to overcome any resistance, uniting them so that their powers are directed by a single motive and act in concert” (Rousseau 2004, 14). History ultimately disproved classical liberalism as a sole explanation for international relations, but elements of classical liberalism and their idealistic roots continue to inform contemporary liberal thought and remain evident in the UN. Neoliberalism attempts to move beyond classical liberalism to provide a framework for the existence and relative success of international institutions based on the premise that their existence cannot be fully explained by state-centrism and a rational self-interest calculation by member states—instead neoliberals believe that cooperation can emerge through the institutional creation of shared interests and norms. Neoliberals look toward international institutions to improve the quality of cooperation, not to provide a definite and undisputed home for unending cooperation between member states. However, critics have suggested that neoliberalism fails to account for how this supposed emergent cooperation can systematically fail to manage (and sometimes even exacerbate) difficult problems—as is evident at the UN when problems emerge, and often remain unresolved, in politically volatile issue areas.

The differentiation between realist and liberal descriptions of the UN is also evident in how scholars seek to apply specific notions of “instrumental” or “normative” associations to UN studies. Instrumentalist approaches are most often rooted in a state-centric notion of realism that seeks to explain events and circumstances based on a description and evaluation of past events, conditions, and patterns of behavior. The behavior of member states

is understood to be self-serving and self-interested, with the wider cooperative outcomes regarded as secondary to these interests. Normative theory is most often rooted in notions of liberalism and cooperation based on a set of principles or guidelines that contain overt value judgments about how the world should be, rather than how the world actually is. Normative theory prioritizes actions that seek to improve and enhance relations between states within the international system. The efficacy of instrumental versus normative behavior forms the heart of any theoretical discussion of the UN. Is the UN merely a reflection of member states' self-interests played out in an international organization setting, or does the UN engender institutional agency that can override member states' self-interests and shape world events according to a universally applied notion of what is best for the world? The instrumental-normative debate represents a complex and often problematic intersection of values and structures, with the UN representing a venue where the actions of both the individual member states (agents) and the resultant developments that they collectively create (structures) are competitively enacted and interrelated. A fundamental problem with theorizing the UN is that the UN is subject to both normative and instrumental demands. The broadly normative intentions of the organization are articulated clearly in the UN Charter—to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. However, the real world needs a practical, instrumental map for normative navigation. Realism and liberalism, and instrumentalist and normative theories, all contain the capacity to partially explain and illuminate parts of any individual event or action. But the UN is both part of, and more than, these seemingly dichotomous debates.

Constructivism

According to Adam Roberts and Benedict Kingsbury, scholars of the so-called “English School” “see [the world] as an international society held together by shared norms and values that the UN both reflects and projects” (Roberts and Kingsbury 2000, 62). Constructivists developed English School theory to introduce socially constructed values and norms as variables of international relations. In essence, constructivism posits that international relations are as dependent on social, moral, and historical trends as they are dependent on the perceived inevitabilities of behavior

implied by realism and liberalism. The application of constructivist theory to the UN is to ask how institutions themselves can be the agents of change. Cornelia Navari has identified the UN as both instigator and recipient of normative ideas-based morality—in addition to having a legal, charter-based obligation to act, the UN has developed moral responsibilities. Indeed, there exists a large body of scholarship that would attribute value to the UN on the basis of its being an ideas forum or rules arbitrator (Weaver 1984). Louis Emmerij, Richard Jolly, and Thomas G. Weiss put forward a convincing argument that the UN is uniquely situated to act as an ideas forum. However, in pursuing the idea that the UN exists as a normative ideas-based institution, there is a need for evidence that the institution is capable of meaningful normative behavior beyond the self-interest of member states. Instead, the evidence points toward the UN as only willing to prioritize a normative agenda only when there is no imperative for individual agents within the institution to be bound to a similar normative enterprise. To a large extent, the UN behavior demonstrates that ideas are not enough and that scholars are required to pay due diligence to the more traditional notions of neoliberalism and neorealism that would look for a required convergence of interests and a sufficient power base on which to sustain the desired change.

Functionalism

Theories of the UN must consider the impact of functionalism. Often regarded as a means to try to accomplish a world government, David Mitrany—a major founder of functionalist thought—argued that if states worked together in specific functional tasks or agencies, it would result in larger political cooperation that could ultimately bring about a peaceful international society, that is, that coordination on a specific task would lead to coordination at progressively higher levels of planning and authority until all tasks were governed by the same political authority. However, functionalism ignores the possibility that the conflicts of an anarchical system of sovereign states might merely be transferred to an anarchical system of competing functional agencies. Functionalism, of course, can account for technical cooperation at its highest levels, but it is arguably naïve to assume that functionalism can underlie international politics and international cooperation. The UN can certainly be explained in part by

functionalism—it houses a number of agencies that each seek to solve a particular international problem or task—but there is little evidence of these agencies assuming an authoritative power beyond that of their constituent parts. Each agency remains bound to its members and the sovereign states that they represent. Attempts to identify such agencies as a-political have uniformly failed. Neofunctionalism was born as an attempt to reconcile functionalism and politics. Derived from the experience of European Union integration, neofunctionalism explores the implications and limitations of functionalism and introduces the idea of political spillover, where the effects of surrendering control of technical tasks induce similar behavior on a political level. However, neofunctionalism cannot easily be transported to a global UN level. There have been attempts to suggest that neofunctionalism can offer a limited explanation for the varying degrees of success attached to contemporary UN reform. However, it remains the case that the individual political components of the UN system are too nationally, ethnically, and culturally diverse to be able to replicate the process that was demonstrated at the European regional level.

Conclusion

No single theory has yet been able to account for the entirety of the UN enterprise—instead, scholars must learn what they can from the dominant theories of international organization, each of which play a role in helping us better understand the UN.

Trudy Fraser

See also [Cosmopolitanism](#); [General Will](#); [Global Civil Society](#); [Humanitarian Intervention](#); [International Relations Theory and Political Thought](#); [Liberalism](#); [Nationalism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [Utopianism](#)

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Utilitarianism

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Utilitarianism

Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) is commonly acknowledged as the founder of utilitarianism as a systematic theory, employable as a critical tool of analysis and guide to moral action, law, and public decision making. In *A Fragment on Government* (1776), he declared it “a fundamental axiom” that “it is the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong,” and that “the obligation to minister to general happiness, was an obligation paramount to and inclusive of every other” (as quoted in Burns and Hart 1977, 393 and 440–41). In 1781, Bentham coined the name “utilitarian” for this theory. At that time, he had largely completed but not published *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789), in which he delineated the component parts of his “science” of morals and legislation founded on the utility principle, the general purpose of which was “to rear the fabric of felicity by the hands of reason and of law” (as quoted in Burns and Hart 1977, 11).

Although Bentham is usually cited as the originator of the theory, the antecedents of utilitarian principles lie in the philosophy of Plato, Aristotle, and Epicurus, and in early Christian thought. Other significant dimensions of the theory can be traced to the writings of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Richard Cumberland. However, it was the “moral sense” philosopher Francis Hutcheson (1694–1746) who, in his *Inquiry Into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725), first postulated “*that Action is best, which accomplishes the greatest Happiness for the greatest Numbers; and that, worst, which in like manner, occasions Misery*” (Treatise II, Section 3).

By indicating that quantities of happiness matter in making moral claims, Hutcheson set the agenda for later utilitarian moralists, but he also suggested the limitations of the aggregative approach when he postulated that “the *moral Importance* of Characters, or *Dignity of Persons* may compensate numbers; as may also the *Degree* of Happiness or Misery” (*An Inquiry Concerning the Original of our Ideas of Virtue or Moral Good*, 1725, Treatise II, Section 3).

In the eighteenth century, utilitarian theory was also developed as an accompaniment to Anglican theology. Advocates of the religious variant of utilitarian theory include John Gay (1699–1745), John Brown (1715–66), Abraham Tucker (1705–74), and William Paley (1743–1805). The ethical hedonism developed by these moralists was premised on the existence of a God who would punish and reward individuals in the afterlife according to the degree to which they acted to enhance general happiness in the present life. However, among the religious exponents, only Paley attempted to derive a comprehensive social philosophy from the utility principle, encompassing morals, government, law, and political economy, in his popular *Principles of Morals and Political Philosophy* (1785).

Bentham’s secular version of the theory was derived from a more progressive strain of Enlightenment thought: empirical, analytical, and antagonistic toward religion. David Hume (1711–76) and Claude Adrien Helvétius (1715–71) were especially important in this regard. In *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739–40), Hume located the source of the rules of justice in general utility, but he explained the psychology of moral conduct in terms of a theory of “moral sentiments” rather than of motives supplied by pleasures and pains. In *De l’esprit* (1758), Helvétius provided a systematic if rudimentary explanation of human motivation in terms of utility perceptions and expectations and some useful suggestions for the application of this knowledge to law and other social questions. Unaware of Hutcheson’s formulation of the utility principle, Bentham attributed it to the Italian law reformer Cesare Beccaria (1738–94) and sometimes to the Nonconformist and natural philosopher Joseph Priestley (1733–1804). In Beccaria’s *Dei delitti e delle pene* (1764), Bentham found a clear statement of the utilitarian formula and its application to an examination of criminal law. The actual phrase “the greatest happiness of the greatest number” is not

found in Priestley's *Essay on the First Principles of Government* (1768). What Bentham would have read there was Priestley's general statement of the need to base policy and law on the principle of utility, which is understood as the general happiness of the community.

The classical form of utilitarian theory encompasses two essential principles: (1) The rightness or wrongness of an action is determined by the goodness or badness of its consequences; and (2) the only thing that is good in itself is pleasure and the only thing bad in itself is pain, and happiness is the net aggregate of pleasures over pains. Based on these elements, the doctrine is then expressed in the form of the greatest happiness principle: The rightness of an action is determined by its contribution to the happiness of everyone affected by it. For Bentham, the relationship between happiness and pleasure and pain was straightforward and did not require elaboration: Pleasure contributes to happiness, while pain detracts from it. In these terms, the public interest is constituted of the aggregate of individual interests, construed in terms of the balance of pleasures and pains experienced by each person. This balance is "the sole end which the legislator ought to have in view: the sole standard in conformity to which each individual ought, as far as depends upon the legislator, to be *made* to fashion his behaviour" (as quoted in Burns and Hart 1977, 34). The legislator has four "sanctions" or sources of pain and pleasure at his disposal, by which to influence individual actions and gain conformity to his decisions: physical, political, moral, and religious. The use of these sanctions explains how an essentially self-interested individual can be encouraged and, where necessary, directed to perform actions that enhance the general happiness of both the individual and others. Bentham may have found these sanctions in John Gay, but contrary to Gay, he did not place the "religious" sanction at the head of the list in terms of efficacy. The physical sanction is fundamental to all motivation, while the political and moral sanctions are the primary instruments of utility, acting principally through the laws and the informal mechanisms of public opinion.

Given the function of the four sanctions delineated by Bentham, it is incumbent on the legislator to understand the "value" of the pleasures and pains he employs as the "instruments" to achieve the end in view. Bentham's felicific calculus describes the elements or dimensions of the

value of a pleasure or pain. To an individual, the value of a pleasure or pain will be more or less according to its “intensity,” “duration,” “certainty or uncertainty,” and its “propinquity or remoteness.” Where the object is to measure the value of a pleasure or pain in terms of the tendency of an act, there are two additional circumstances to be taken into account: “fecundity,” that is, “the chance it has of being followed by sensations of the *same* kind,” and “purity,” that is, “the chance it has of *not* being followed by sensations of the *opposite* kind.” Where there are a number of persons with reference to whom the value of a pleasure or a pain is considered, a further circumstance must be factored into the calculus—the “extent” or the number of persons affected by the pleasure or pain (as quoted in Burns and Hart 1977, 38–39). In sum, these are the dimensions of the value of pleasures and pains that must be considered by the legislator to arrive at the correct law or policy.

One of the most serious challenges to Bentham’s approach to the value of pleasures and pains is found in the later version of utilitarian theory expounded by John Stuart Mill (1806–73), first stated in the essay “Bentham” (1838) and given definitive expression in *Utilitarianism* (1861). The most problematic of the refinements of the theory Mill offered was the distinction between the *qualitative* differences of types of pleasures, an idea found in rudimentary form in Paley’s *Principles* (Bk. I, Ch. VI). Although adhering to the basic hedonism of utilitarian theory and to the Benthamic analysis of motives, Mill argued that certain “higher pleasures,” by which he meant the pleasures of altruism and the cultivation of the higher feelings and the intellect, were intrinsically more desirable or worthy than other pleasures. However, this qualitative distinction seemed to undermine the aggregative dimension of the theory and introduced a questionable elitism in terms of who was the appropriate judge of which pleasures were preferable. Recent scholarship has questioned whether Mill’s distinction was really a departure from Bentham’s theory. It is arguable that Bentham’s discussion of pleasures and pains implicitly recognized that certain sorts of pleasures were preferable to others, and that his strictures on measurement referred to quantitative measures of pleasures that are the same in quality (Rosen 2003, 174–80). However, Mill raised further questions about the integrity of the theory by arguing that the constituent elements of an individual’s happiness might encompass objectives such as the pursuit of

truth, beauty, and virtue, without consideration for the utility they may bring. This view was later adopted by G. E. Moore (1873–1958) in the *Principia Ethica* (1903). Rejecting the hedonism of Bentham and Mill, Moore set forth a “consequentialist” theory now known as *i deal* utilitarianism, in which the “good” to be attained is more expansive than the summation of pleasures, and contains within itself certain objective features of the universe, preeminently, the beauty of its constituent parts.

A common complaint about utilitarianism, at least in its classical form, is that there is an unresolved conflict between the goal of the greatest happiness and the psychological hedonism according to which the motivation for action is explained. Simply put, how can essentially self-interested individuals be expected to pursue the good, that is, the happiness of others? Elie Halévy addressed this issue in *The Growth of Philosophic Radicalism* (1901–4), explaining that we can detect two distinct but compatible approaches to the question in the writings of the classical utilitarians: a “natural harmony” of interests and an “artificial identification” of interests. A “natural harmony” of interests is typically produced in the realm of economic activity when individuals pursuing only their own interests ultimately produce outcomes beneficial to the public interest. This idea has its roots in Bernard Mandeville’s *Fable of the Bees* (1714) and is elaborated in the writings of Adam Smith and others in terms of the operations of an “invisible hand” or the “unintended consequences” of individual actions. Some utilitarians, such as the American Richard Hildreth (1807–65) in *Theory of Morals* (1844), reversed the relationship when they counseled that only by pursuing benevolence will individuals find their own personal happiness—an echo of Plato’s argument in *The Republic*. An “artificial identification” of interests is usually the product of law and its sanctions, which are intended to introduce additional motives into an individual’s consideration of particular actions and dissuade him from conduct contrary to the public interest. Education, particularly moral instruction, was sometimes seen as a way of bridging these two approaches; once individuals properly understand their duty to act in the public interest, then the sanctions of law become redundant. The optimism implicit in this idea led William Godwin (1756–1836) in *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793) to envisage a time when societies might be able to function

entirely on the principle of cooperation without the need for law to produce the greatest happiness.

The distinction between “act” and “rule utilitarianism” has frequently exercised scholars. Although sometimes described as an act utilitarian, for Bentham, properly constituted rules, based on calculations of general utility, should be the guides for human conduct. Simply put, it is not realistic to expect an individual to calculate the anticipated consequences of actions in every instance. The function of utilitarian rules of morality and justice is to save the individual from this onerous burden. However, where new evidence suggests that the rules are ineffective, are improperly constructed, or produce outcomes inconsistent with general utility, then the agent must engage in a first-order calculation. However, in the ordinary run of things, we must rely on rules of conduct to guide us. John Austin (1790–1859), a disciple of Bentham’s jurisprudence, is usually cited as the first explicit rule utilitarian. However, in *The Province of Jurisprudence Determined* (1832), he made it clear that he had learned the significance of rules from Paley, from whom he also borrowed the theological elements of his theory. Hume and Tucker were also clear about the centrality of rules. To the criticism that utilitarianism sacrificed principles to expediency, Mill replied that it was expedient to observe the rules associated with general utility and implied that only saints could be utilitarians, able to continually calculate the consequences of their actions. The debate between “act” and “rule” utilitarianism features in the exchange between the modern act utilitarian J. J. C. Smart and his critic Bernard Williams in *Utilitarianism: For and Against* (1973).

The prevailing preference for rule utilitarianism has not prevented critics of the theory from stressing the implications of an aggregate-utilitarian calculation for societies in which unpalatable sacrifices seem to be determined by calculations of optimal utility. In *A Theory of Justice* (1971), John Rawls argued that in counting *only* interests and aggregating *across* persons to arrive at the appropriate action or policy, the utilitarian fails to “take seriously” the distinction between persons. Derek Parfit launched a similar attack in *Reasons and Persons* (1984) when he demonstrated the absurdity of aggregate happiness comparisons between hypothetical future societies in a regressive examination of situations in which increases in

population were matched by decreases in happiness. The logic of Parfit's comparative analysis culminates in the utilitarian's choosing a situation in which hundreds of billions of people experience lives that are hardly worth living over a future in which a far smaller number of people are extremely happy. Paul Kelly offered a vigorous response to these sorts of criticisms in *Utilitarianism and Distributive Justice* (1990). Kelly argued that at the level of private ethics, utilitarian calculations implicitly acknowledge that different and distinct persons are involved in most situations about which individuals have to make moral judgments. And, more especially, a consistent utilitarian will treat the interests of different people affected by his or her actions as of equal importance. In Mill's theory, this position took the form of the "impartiality" requirement, which states that the agent should not give a preference to her own interest over that of others affected by her actions but should treat all interests, her own and those of others, equally. This impartiality suggests that utilitarian theory should not be construed as *merely* aggregative. Moreover, versions of the theory that stress it as a foundation for law, particularly in relation to "indirect" utilitarian approaches to achieving the greatest happiness, offer the most fruitful line of defense. From this perspective, utilitarians argue that legally sanctioned minimum guarantees in the form of basic rights make issues of distribution rather less sensational than critics—who stress the plight of minorities and the vulnerable at the mercy of strict aggregate calculations—commonly suppose.

Utilitarianism has enjoyed a sustained, if at times ambiguous, presence in the liberal tradition, and it continues to have a major presence in economic theory, generally subsumed under the concern with material welfare. Classical economists from Adam Smith and John Mill to Alfred Marshall (1842–1924) and Arthur Pigou (1877–1959) were especially concerned with the situation of "productive labour," the needs of those members of society who, as Mill explained in *Principles of Political Economy* (1848), produced the "utilities fixed and embodied in outward objects," that is, the production of the utilities or pleasures created by "investing external material things with properties which render these serviceable to human beings" (as quoted in Warnock 1962, 45–46). Mill is commonly understood as a *liberal* utilitarian who advocated an "indirect" version of utilitarianism in a more clear-cut way than is evident in Bentham's writings. Since law

involves sanctions and restricts individual liberty, there are always *prima facie* moral reasons against enacting law. Mill developed this concern into the famous “harm” principle in *On Liberty* (1859), according to which the sovereign should interfere with the actions of individuals only when these could be shown to be harmful, or potentially harmful, *to others—and not even in all such cases*. The application of this critical principle of morality was further developed in the positivist legal theory of H. L. A. Hart, particularly in his debate with Lord Devlin in the 1960s concerning the decriminalization of homosexuality between consenting adults. Mill’s theory of justice stressed the utility value of *security*, and his moral philosophy placed the accent on individuals being facilitated by government in the pursuit of happiness in ways of their own choosing, rather than being directed into particular codes of conduct. Both elements required that definable limits be placed on the functions of law and determined a gradualist approach to achieving optimal utilitarian outcomes through social and political reform. However, Mill also stressed the egalitarian character of utilitarianism when he claimed that the maxim “each to count for one, and none for more than one” (attributed to Bentham) should be “written under the principle of utility as an explanatory commentary” indicating that each person possessed an equal right to happiness (as quoted in Warnock 1962, 319). Added to which, in later life he was inclined toward collectivist solutions to social problems, most notably, in the *Chapters on Socialism*. In *Social Statics* (1851), Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), like Bentham and Mill, argued that everyone possessed an equal capacity for pleasure and everyone should, therefore, be counted in calculating social welfare. However, in *Man versus the State* (1884), he employed the utility principle to enhance the liberty of the individual, defend the existing social order, and attack the drift toward socialism and “slavery.” Other reform-minded liberals, like Leonard Trelawny Hobhouse (1864–1929) in *Liberalism* (1911), found in the protean nature of utilitarianism a justification for distinctly nonindividualist policies. Hobhouse incorporated utilitarianism into a new liberal discourse that, in addition to laissez-faire economics, also bridged elements of socialism, Social Darwinism, and the idealism of Thomas Hill Green (1836–82), and out of which emerged the beginnings of Britain’s welfare state.

Henry Sidgwick (1838–1900) also gave voice to “socialist” sentiments in developing his *intuitional* utilitarian theory in *The Methods of Ethics* (1874) and other writings. Often described as the most philosophically sophisticated of the classical utilitarians, Sidgwick was not a utilitarian in an unqualified sense of the term, and on the question of religion, he sided with Paley and Austin rather than with Bentham and Mill. He believed that only some form of theological postulate about the moral harmony of the universe could plausibly resolve the potential conflict between the moral point of view and the personal point of view. He thought the utilitarian perspective was the correct point of view for those in political power and administrative positions in the state—their enlarged responsibilities required it since they are most likely to be able to put such a view into practice—but it is simply not expected of private individuals. This distinction led Sidgwick to develop an ethical theory based on an amalgamation of utilitarian principles with intuitionism. The criterion for utilitarianism is the general happiness; the criterion for intuitionism is the conformity to duty as defined by fundamental and self-evident principles. By comparison, egoism, included by Sidgwick as one of the “methods” of ethics, offers an account of motives in terms of the happiness of the individual alone.

Among the early classical political economists, David Ricardo (1772–1823) is best known for working with the utilitarian standard of happiness as the criterion against which all policy should be assessed, in *The Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* (1817). In *The Theory of Political Economy* (1871), William Stanley Jevons (1835–82) explicitly took his starting point from Bentham’s utility theory, along with the axiomatic proposition that each person acts to maximize his or her own pleasure, and developed a sophisticated examination of consumer behavior in the marketplace. The mathematician and economist F. Y. Edgeworth (1845–1926) integrated the idea of biological progress in his thoughts on social welfare, leading him to question the utilitarian assumption of moral equality (*Mathematical Psychics*, 1881). Just as societies differ in their levels of civilization, so groups or classes of individuals within a society stand at different levels of evolution, with those at the higher levels demonstrably more capable of education and improvement. Concomitantly, this distinction reveals differences in capacities for happiness, and leads to the

conclusion that the objective of social welfare may require that policy makers sacrifice the happiness of the lower classes to the happiness of the higher classes. Contrary to this view, and under the powerful influence of Pigou's utilitarian analysis in *The Economics of Welfare* (1920), Lionel Robbins (1898–1984), who thought of himself as a “provisional” utilitarian, argued that “as a first approximation” in dealing with major policy questions, “the approach which counts each man as one, and, on that assumption, asks which way lies the greatest happiness, is less likely to lead one astray than any of the absolute systems.” This logic was not because Robbins subscribed to the natural-law assumption that all individuals are in fact equal but that “in most cases, political calculations which did not treat them *as if* they were equal are morally revolting” (1938, 635). However, Robbins could not entirely free himself from the thought that Edgeworth may have been right in supposing that some are more capable of happiness than others, a conception that would necessarily undermine attempts to construct cost–benefit calculations based on the assumption of equality. This dilemma led Robbins and other economists to conceive utility calculations in “ordinal” rather than in “cardinal” terms.

The transition from cardinal to ordinal utility calculations in the 1930s and 1940s constituted a revolution in economic value theory. Interpersonal comparison, and with it the tendency to conceive utility or welfare as cardinal and aggregative across individuals, were now generally shunned in favor of ordinal-value theory based on the ranking of states of affairs. This way of looking at the world originated with the *Manuale di economia politica* (1927) by Vilfredo Pareto (1848–1923). In principle, aggregative utility calculations allow us to rank and compare all states of affairs, but where interpersonal comparisons or aggregative calculations are ruled out, then it is much more difficult to make such rankings. Two competing policy options may both produce a positive outcome but for different sections of the population, and this fact makes it ambiguous whether one policy should be preferred over another or whether the status quo is preferable. For this reason, economists have generally adopted the idea of ordinal utility and have employed it as a mathematical tool for ordering noncomparable preferences. Nevertheless, the uncertainties that attend ordinal utility calculations have spawned an extensive literature in game theory, in which

strategic choices are only ever contingently correct or right (productive of an overall good) depending on the choices of others.

Writing in the early twenty-first century, Richard Layard is one of few mainstream economists to turn his back on ordinalism to argue that governments should base economic policy not on its potential for contributing to the country's gross national product but rather on the original Benthamic guide of the maximization of happiness, construed in terms of the average happiness of the population and adjusted to give extra weight to the happiness of the least well-off. In making this case in *Happiness: Lessons from a New Science* (2005), Layard substantially reiterated and defended the positions of the classical utilitarians, most notably, Bentham and Mill.

James E. Crimmins

See also [Bentham, Jeremy](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Godwin, William](#); [Hobhouse, Leonard Trelawny](#); [Liberalism](#); [Mill, James](#); [Mill, John Stuart](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Rawls, John](#)

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Lyman Tower Sargent Lyman Tower Sargent

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Utopianism

I have never understood why the charge of utopianism is necessarily thought to be an objection to a theory of politics. One legitimate aspiration of moral and political theory is surely to show us what lines of action we are committed to undertaking by the values we profess to accept.

—Skinner 1998, 78–79

The word *utopia* was coined by Thomas More (1478–1535) as the name of the imaginary country in his 1516 book *Libellus vere aureus nec minus salutaris quam festivus de optimo reip. statu, deq. noua Insula Vtopia* (“Concerning the Best State of a Commonwealth and the New Island of Utopia”), now known as his *Utopia*. The word, Latin but derived from Greek, simply means “no place” or “nowhere” (*u* or *ou* means “no” or “not”; *topos* means “place”), but More played with an alternative prefix *eu*, or “good,” and the word *utopia* has come to mean a “nonexistent good place.” Although More gave a name to the practice of depicting imaginary places, such depictions have been found in all cultures at least as early as the written word and probably earlier.

After More, the word “utopia” seemed almost to take on a life of its own. The Polish philosopher Leszek Kolakowski (1927–2009) noted the process by which a word that

emerged as an artificially concocted proper name has acquired, in the last two centuries, a sense so extended that it refers not only to a literary genre but to a way of thinking, to a mentality, to a philosophical attitude, and is being employed in depicting cultural phenomena going back into antiquity. (Kolakowski 1990, 131)

Today, utopianism is the label for all these phenomena. Specifically, utopianism includes four overlapping but different things (Sargent 1994). First, it is, as Kolakowski notes, a genre of literature, one that in a wide variety of forms has existed from far back in antiquity. Second, many attempts to bring an imagined ideal into practice have been called utopian. These also can be traced as far back into antiquity as Hindu ashrams as early as 1500 BCE, and later Buddhist monasteries, the Jewish community at Qumran, and the early Christian church in Jerusalem, among other early examples. Third, it became, much later but with early roots, what Kolakowski called “a way of thinking,” “a mentality,” “a philosophical attitude,” and can be more generally called utopian social theory. Fourth, there is anti-utopianism, which can be seen as early as Aristophanes (448–380 BCE), a category that includes Kolakowski. And over time all four and the ways they overlap have become more complex.

Utopian Literature

Some texts of utopian literature, like More’s *Utopia*, much of utopian social theory, and anti-utopianism are commonly included within the history of political thought, but much of the literature and most of the practice are not, even when they belong there. Utopian literature and practice reflect the issues of their time and are more inclusive than much political thought because they are not narrowly political but include the political within a broader social context that includes such things as child-rearing and education, religion, economics, and gender relations, among others. This showing of an embedded political either through imagination (literature) or experiment (practice) is one reason utopianism is central, or should be, to the history of political thought.

Utopian literature has always played two roles, critique and proposal, with the first more important than the second. In almost all utopias, a comparison is made between the existing society and the utopia, obviously to the detriment of the existing society. And utopias have always had a strong satirical vein, some of it acting as a critique of the present, and some, in more complex texts, also reflecting on the utopia being depicted.

The earliest post-More utopias in the Western tradition stressed the importance of a strictly defined Christian life, but the genre of literature quickly took advantage of More's multifaceted text and developed in a variety of directions, with utopia as critique particularly important. Other works reached back before More to the Arcadia and the Golden Age and Earthly Paradise, but as early as the beginning of the seventeenth century, utopias presenting specific economic, political, and social proposals were published. Utopianism has, therefore, been marked by considerable variety throughout its history.

Initially, the political role of utopianism was straightforward in that it was a way of making an argument about social improvement that might, because of its fictional form, escape the attention of censors and, for the same reason, attract a wider audience. And to escape the censors, many utopias were published anonymously or under a pseudonym and with false places of publication and publishers. That their authors did not always escape is neatly exemplified by the title page of the 1795 *The Commonwealth of Reason*, which gives the author's name as "William Hodgson, Now confined in the prison of Newgate, London, for sedition."

Utopian literature became particularly important politically at the end of the nineteenth century with the publication of *Looking Backward: 2000–1887* by Edward Bellamy (1850–98). This novel directly inspired new political programs to nationalize industries or municipalize utilities throughout the world. Bellamy's utopia was, like most in the nineteenth century, socialist. Utopian literature has always reflected the dominant (and many minor) questions in any period. As noted, economic issues dominated the late nineteenth century, and socialist or antisocialist utopias were very common. But at the same time, a slightly less common concern with eugenics came to the fore, and many utopias written at the time included some examination of

eugenics, even if it was not central. That concern has regularly recurred in the literature since then, and today, with the advent of the possibility of genetic engineering, it often takes center stage, mostly in dystopias. The middle of the twentieth century was concerned with communism and national socialism or fascism, and many anti-utopias were written directed against them. At the beginning of the second half of the century, utopias focused most strongly on feminism and environmentalism, and in both cases, utopias came to play prominent roles in the feminist and environmental movements.

In the early myths, utopia was brought into being by nature or the gods, but in utopias brought about by human action, some further explanation is needed. Therefore, although often without great detail, utopias generally include some notion of how the utopia is to be achieved. In most cases, it is brought about by evolution rather than revolution. And the primary means of achieving utopia are relatively limited. First, and central to utopianism throughout its history, is religion. In particular, for Christians, utopia can be achieved if people actually follow the church's teachings rather than just paying lip service to them. Second in importance is education, which is important for both achieving and maintaining utopia. Third in importance is law. Changing the laws can help to bring utopia about, and having the right laws in place will be essential to keeping the utopia once it has been established. But, and this is where utopias vary tremendously, the content of the education and the laws is of central importance. Here there simply is no generalization possible. Utopias and dystopias have been written from every imaginable perspective. It is true that there have been dominant images at different times and places, but these were always accompanied by other utopias projected on different bases that reflected the concerns of different groups in society or even just the interests of a particular individual.

As noted, from Aristophanes on, there has been an anti-utopian literature that attacks either specific utopias or utopianism in general. Connected with the upsurge of utopias written after the publication of Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward: 2000–1887* (1888), an upsurge of works purported to show what Bellamy's future would really be like and why it would be bad rather than good.

Although the word *dystopia*, or “bad place,” was used as early as the middle of the eighteenth century, it became prominent as a literature and concept only in the early twentieth century. Yet it has become the dominant form of utopian literature since then. Even though many dystopias depict a simplistic authoritarianism, the genre is much more complex and less negative than that stereotype in that dystopias act as jeremiads depicting what will happen if the human race does not shape up. This perspective at least implies that humanity can still mend its ways and avoid the depicted future. Thus, many dystopias serve explicitly as warnings against continuing current behavior.

Utopian Practice

In parallel with relevant literature during the Reformation, radical Protestants established communities in which they hoped to lead the lives their reading of the Bible required of them. Few found it possible to do so in Europe and therefore chose to move to the Americas, with the first such community established by Dutch Mennonites in 1659 and others following, particularly from Germany and then from England.

The early communities were religious; some were simply trying to lead the life they thought the Bible required, while others were preparing for the Second Coming of Christ, which they believed to be imminent. But in the early nineteenth century, secular communities became common, often with the idea of showing what could be achieved by following the teachings of some theorist, with quite a few communities established to create the world outlined by the so-called utopian socialists, most often Robert Owen (1771–1858), Charles Fourier (1772–1837), and Henri Saint-Simon (1760–1825), and sometimes including Étienne Cabet (1788–1856). But “utopian socialism” was given its name and was sympathetically criticized but ultimately rejected by Friedrich Engels (1820–95) and Karl Marx (1818–83) and their followers. Marxists faulted the utopian socialists for engaging in wishful fantasies not rooted in actual historical processes—unlike the “scientific socialism” they advocated. None of the secular communities founded in the nineteenth century lasted very long, with fire, a scourge of many nonutopian villages, being a common cause of failure, together with internal disputes, lack of money or skilled labor, and poor or uneven

leadership. Religious communities such as the Shakers and Hutterites lasted longer, with some founded as early as the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries still in existence. The largest network of communities today, now a century old, is the Israeli kibbutzim. And some religious communities have advocated as strongly for nonreligious change as their secular counterparts, with economic and gender equality, direct involvement in decision making, and nonviolence being issues of particular importance.

Such communities, both religious and secular, were often called utopian experiments because the people were experimenting with their own lives, with some schemes being radical. The most common feature of such communities was some version of common property, but many engaged in different sexual relations, ranging from celibacy to forms of collective marriage. Most secular communities and some religious ones aimed at, and some achieved, greater political, economic, and gender equality. Some worked to change how people prepared and ate their food (common kitchens and meals), and some changed what people ate (vegetarian and fruitarian communities). Many tried to mix mental and physical labor, valuing both equally, and many tried to vary work so that no one was required to do the same thing all the time.

Although awareness of such communities varied over time, they continued to be established on a regular basis, flourishing, or languishing for a time, and either continuing to the present or closing; indeed, this pattern continues to the present. The one great break in the pattern occurred in the so-called 1960s (dates vary from country to country) when thousands of mostly secular communities were established, many deliberately temporary and for specific purposes like antiwar activism or producing an underground newspaper, but many had a broader vision. A substantial number of the communities founded in the 1960s still exist, although rarely with the same people. Since then, the community movement has gone in a number of new directions such as environmentally focused ecovillages, communities for seniors, single-sex communities, and cohousing, which combines individual homes with substantial community space. Thus, people are still experimenting with their lives to find a better way of life.

Throughout the history of communal living, opposition has been strong. Some ex-members have concluded that they were misled and mistreated or simply feel that the communities did not meet their expectations. For example, in his novel *The Blithedale Romance* (1852), Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804–64) reflects on his not very happy experience at the Brook Farm Community. Others attacked communities from the perspective of a different vision of how life should be lived, seeing such experiments as a danger to their preferred vision. These contending visions illustrate why utopian practice is appropriately part of the history of political thought, and the texts created by the communities, describing and defending their visions, are certainly contributions to that history.

Utopianism and Social Theory

Although there have been utopian and anti-utopian texts throughout history, it was utopian practice that elicited, in the first half of the nineteenth century, the first systematic anti-utopianism, directed initially at Robert Owen by those supporting the existing economic system and then slightly later against the utopian socialists by Marxists. Since then, Marxists have been divided on the question of utopianism, with many continuing the rejection by Marx and Engels, but with others, like Ernst Bloch, arguing for the central importance of utopianism.

The most sustained attack on utopianism came in the mid-twentieth century from those who equated it with communism and National Socialism. The best-known such attack is Karl R. Popper's (1902–94) *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1945), whose argument is fairly simple and straightforward. In its most basic form, utopia is said to equal perfection, and since human beings are not perfect, the supporters of the utopia will require force and violence to achieve their ends and in doing so will favor an authoritarian regime. A variant of this argument describes utopias as blueprints of an ideal society that are intended to be constructed in all their detail, which will then similarly require force, violence, and an authoritarian regime. But as George Kateb wrote, "any serious utopian thinker will be made uncomfortable by the very idea of blueprint, of detailed recommendations concerning all facets of life" (as quoted in Manuel 1967, 239).

The argument in favor of utopianism is put as forcefully as that against. If the Popperian position implies the end of civilized life, the position put forth by Karl Mannheim (1893–1947), F. L. Polak (1907–85), Ernst Bloch (1885–1997), and others is that civilization depends on our continuing ability to imagine utopias or, in Polak’s words, “positive images of the future.” Put generally, the argument is that since few if any believe that we now live in the best of all possible worlds, it is essential that we take seriously the need to imagine what a better world might look like. Doing so will allow us to set priorities and create the tools needed to move in the right direction. In his major work, *The Image of the Future* (Dutch 1955/English 1961), Polak traces the history of such images in Western thought.

Ernst Bloch is generally considered the most important modern theorist of utopianism, which is central to his understanding of the world. Bloch sees elements or fragments of utopia everywhere, many such elements compensatory or “abstract” but some expressing the possibility of the “concrete.” And like Polak, Bloch, in his major work, *The Principle of Hope* (German 1955–9/English 1986), develops a history of utopianism.

Much of the twentieth-century debate over utopia has also been seen from the point of view of conflicting ideologies, and the relationship between ideology and utopia has been an important issue starting with Karl Mannheim’s *Ideologie und Utopie* in 1929 and his quite different *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge* in 1936. Although Mannheim made clear distinctions between the two, as did Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005), the other major theorist of the two concepts, many commentators conflate the two. For Mannheim, ideology reflects the mentality of those in power, and utopia reflects the mentality of rising groups. For Ricoeur, ideology provides legitimation for a group, and utopia challenges that legitimacy. For both, utopia is more important than ideology in that Mannheim contends that if we lose utopia, we lose our humanity, and Ricoeur argues that although both ideology and utopia have positive functions, we need utopia as a constant challenge to ideology.

Thus, utopianism has played an important role throughout the history of political thought. And although the focus here has been on Western political

thought, utopianism has also been important outside that tradition, particularly, but not exclusively, in Chinese and Indian political thought.

Lyman Tower Sargent

See also [Bellamy, Edward](#); [Communism, Varieties of](#); [Communitarianism](#); [Community](#); [Dictatorship of the Proletariat](#); [Equality and Egalitarianism](#); [Fourier, Charles](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Orwell, George](#); [Owen, Robert](#); [Progress](#); [Property, Theories of](#); [Russian Revolution, Political Thought of the](#); [Saint-Simon, Henri de](#); [Socialism](#); [Totalitarianism](#)

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V

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One of the most creative and prolific political philosophers of recent times, Eric Voegelin (1901–85) was born in Cologne on January 3 and grew up in Vienna. He joined the Faculty of Law at the University of Vienna, beginning as an assistant to Hans Kelsen. Following the *Anschluss* of 1938, when Germany occupied and annexed Austria, Voegelin was dismissed because of his books and other work in opposition to Hitler and the National Socialists. Shortly thereafter, he narrowly escaped the Gestapo by fleeing to Switzerland and then the United States, where he resumed his academic career. Along with his wife, Lissy Onken, Voegelin was naturalized as a U.S. citizen in 1944.

Academic Career

In the United States, Voegelin taught at Harvard University, Bennington College, Northwestern University, and the University of Alabama; then, in 1942, he joined the faculty at Louisiana State University, where he remained for sixteen years. He became one of the university's first three Boyd Professors and also taught jurisprudence in the law school. In 1958, Voegelin accepted an appointment as chair in political science at the University of Munich, a position that had been last held by Max Weber. There he established the Geschwister Scholl Institute for Political Science in the hope, he said, of fostering democratic free government in Germany.

In 1968 he retired from this position to become the Henry Salvatori Distinguished Scholar at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University.

His principal writings are gathered in the *Collected Works of Eric Voegelin* (hereinafter cited as CW), which among other things includes the eight volumes of *History of Political Ideas* and the five volumes of *Order and History*. The Eric Voegelin archive of over 76,000 documents is lodged in the Hoover Institution, indexed, and available on microfilm.

Political Philosophy

The hallmark of Voegelin's political philosophy is the quest for political reality and its truth and resistance to reductionist ideologies and deformations, in both theoretical and practical aspects. In pursuing this path, Voegelin elaborates a new science of politics that critically abandons the positivist mode of inquiry in favor of a philosophical science grounded in classical noesis as the new paradigm of inquiry, one empirically anchored in noetic and pneumatic (revelatory) experiences of reality. Philosophizing as the love of wisdom rather than its definitive possession is essentially exploration of the tension toward transcendent divine Being as experienced in noetic and pneumatic modes by individual contemplatives. This opening of the horizon of inquiry reaffirms the salience of commonsense experience in thought and practice and stresses the pertinence of the whole hierarchy of being from Anaximandrian *apeiron* (Depth) to divine *Nous* (Reason) for the realm of human participation and striving. As a result, human nature is understood to be the epitome of being, and every human being participates in all levels of reality from the material to the divine. As a further consequence, a satisfactory political order must take account of this range of reality in its representation of true order in society. To fail to do so or to invert lower dimensions of reality for higher ones leads to deformation of existence through reductionism. For example, such reductionism may elevate materiality as the highest being—over spiritual and intellectual spheres, as in Marxism; by the racial biologism of the National Socialists; or by the Nietzschean egophanic apocalypse of the *Übermensch*, whereby the highest being for man is man himself. This line of analysis obviously involves ontology and epistemology and does so by restoring the full sphere of human reality, on one hand, and by evoking a more inclusive range of

experience so as to include participation in being, on the other. All of this is generally familiar from classical and medieval philosophy, and all of it is occluded or rejected in the reigning scientific mode of analysis and paradigm of the sciences of human affairs as merely phenomenal and concerned with knowledge of things.

In addition to the problems of reductionism, the ideological deformation can occur from a number of other sources, including immanentization of faith symbols as famously sketched in Voegelin's *New Science of Politics* (1952), his first book in English. Here the several aspects of the Christian eschatological faith symbols are treated (immanentized) as though they were intended to apply to temporal political processes rather than to illuminate the tension toward transcendent divine being. Thus, the pilgrim's progress or journey through time in partnership with God yields progressivism, the ultimate state of fulfilment in Beatitude; union with God becomes utopianism; and the immanentization of the entire symbolism yields the revolutionary activism of the Marxian dialectic. In this process of modern "gnosticism," the supplanting of faith by the certitude of knowledge involves moving from uncertain truth to certain untruth. The account is elaborated to include four symbolisms drawn especially from the writings of Joachim of Fiore (born c. 1130–35, died 1202) as typical of the immanentist deformation—the division of history into three ages of increasing degrees of perfection: the intellectual who knows the truth of reality basic to the gnostic dogma; the leader of the new age of truth that will lead humankind to fulfillment; and the culminating third age of history conceived as the brotherhood of autonomous persons (perfected through a free descent of Grace in Joachim) when no governing institutions will be needed and the "perfecti" can live together without coercion. (For Voegelin this narrative was adapted in the secularized narratives of Auguste Comte, Karl Marx, and the National Socialist *Dritte Reich*.) All are characterized by a prohibition against questions that could invalidate the dreamworld second reality's dogmatic truth claims and restore order—as in Marx's injunction *denke nicht frage mich nicht*, since a rational man sticks to the reality under his eyes and doesn't ask questions about the Ground of being (Marx, "1844 Manuscripts").

The matrix of this critique that pronounces gnosticism to be the essence of modernity (later qualified in Voegelin's work to include also a range of additional factors such as alchemy, magic, and apocalypticism) is the constructive philosophy of consciousness and history fundamental to Voegelin's ontology. Here it must be stressed that the reality question is basic to political theory in his view. The core of that comes with the insistence from his earliest writings that an essential part of inquiry is the meditative exploration of the heights and depths experienced and symbolized as an impetus begun in the open inquiry in classical philosophical noesis as it eventually culminates in the Anselmian *fides quaerens intellectum* of faith in search of understanding. The stages of emergence of divine-human disclosure of highest truth are represented in the cosmological foundation reflected in myth; the breakthrough (leap in being) to the transcendent truth in the anthropological truth of the classical philosophers (vision of the *Agathon* or Good beyond being in Plato; the contemplative's rise to *athanatizien* or immortalizing in Aristotle; the substance of society as *psyche* so that society is Man writ large); and the further differentiation through revelation of soteriological truth as elaborated in the First Epistle of John 4 as *amicitia*. There follows Aquinas's great philosophy of man developed from it in terms of *fides caritate formata* or faith formed through love as the climax of the meditative movement of the human response to divine disclosure and truth of the participatory divine-human partnership in being that is paradigmatic and underlies the Anselmian quest ontologically.

Voegelin's path to this vision of metaxic reality (the In-Between of human existence in all times and places), the quest of a lifetime, can only be hinted at here. But the orientation toward it filled his mind and shaped his work from early on, as can be gleaned from further examples arising in his writings and reflecting his conviction of mystical philosophy as the authentic posture of open existence in all the great philosophical meditations in the Western tradition from Parmenides onward (CW15, 279–93; CW18, 102–04).

Already in his 1928 book *On the Form of the American Mind*, the 27-year old Voegelin finds the key to Jonathan Edwards's thought in his departure from Calvinist dogma and the open embrace of a pantheistic mysticism

especially in his late work. Voegelin sympathetically and powerfully relates Edwards's philosophizing to the subsequent thought of Charles Peirce, to William James's pure experience and pluralistic universe, and even to George Santayana's metaphysics, to find it uniquely and representatively American. Thus, Voegelin writes: "In the United States . . . ideas did not follow any skeptical tradition but worked with the '*openness*' of the self; the naive juxtaposition of God and man remains intact" (CW1, 140–42, italics added).

Five years later, in confronting Nazi race theory and its perverse reductionist biologism, Voegelin declares that the knowledge of man has come to grief and looks to Thomas à Kempis for succor. The primal image is evoked in Jesus:

Man must live according to the example of Christ and follow him. . . . Every day is to be lived as if it were the last, and the soul should always be anxious for the world beyond the senses. Perfect calm of the soul can be found only in the eternal gaze upon God. (CW3, *History of the Race Idea*, 4)

Five years later, Voegelin concludes his little *Political Religions* book with a Jeremiah-like evocation of spiritual fervor by quoting the admonitions of the anonymous fourteenth-century mystic known only as the Frankfurter, and his *German Theology* condemning as satanic the new Nazi religiosity (along with similar movements): "The inner-worldly religiosity experienced by the collective body—be it humanity, the people, the class, the race, or the state—as the *realissimum* is abandonment of God . . . [it] is anti-Christian renunciation" (CW5, *Modernity Without Restraint*, 71).

Many other examples come to mind, of course. The very opening line of *Order and History* (written in 1956) glows with the insight of the mystic philosopher and is unintelligible apart from its illumination: "God, man, world, and society form a primordial community of being." In the preface to the book occurs a definition indicative of the meditative scope of the enterprise: "Philosophy is the love of being through the love of divine Being as the source of its order" (CW14, 39, 24).

Nearly a decade later on (1964), in his lectures introducing political science to students in Munich, Voegelin stressed the ontological perspective controlling the discourse and the ambiguity of the term *present*, which can mean a point lying between past and future and the

other meaning of the present, in which the present is always related to the existence of man in his presence under God. [Thus], while existing and acting in immanent time—man [also] exists under God, he has presence [so that everyman lives not only] within the immanent process [but also] under the judgment of the Presence. (CW31, 71)

This abiding dimension of reality is sturdy enough to withstand all human rebellion, as Voegelin stresses. “Even if Hegel, Marx, and Nietzsche thoroughly murder God and explain him away as dead, divine Being remains eternal and man must still get on with living his life sealed by his creatureliness and by death” (CW31, 262).

Finally, twenty years later in his deathbed meditation “Quod deus dicitur” (1985), the old mystic philosopher finds in Anselm’s *Proslogion* the optimal form of philosophizing itself whereby the open inquiry into the heights and depths of reality arrives at the pinnacle moment as the meditative consciousness prayerfully attains the limit of the soul’s noetic ascent: ““O Lord, you are not only that than which a greater cannot be conceived, but you are also greater than what can be conceived.”” Voegelin comments,

The noetic quest of Anselm thus assumes the form of a prayer for an understanding of the symbols of faith through the human intellect. . . . The true source of the Anselmian effort [is] the living desire of the soul to move toward the divine light. The divine reality lets the light of its perfection fall into the soul; the illumination of the soul arouses the awareness of man’s existence in a state of imperfection; and this awareness provokes the human movement in response to the divine appeal. (CW12, 383)

By Voegelin's analysis, a theory of politics if it penetrates to principles must at the same time become a philosophy of history (CW5, 88). This, in turn, is conceived not as an account of pragmatic events but essentially as an account of participatory experience of divine disclosure with the ineffable thereby becoming effable in the metaxic reality of divine-human participation over time and, thereby, an ontology empirically grounded in theophanic events. This differentiating unfolding of experience is the source of truth and order in politics and history as it becomes articulate in the lives and work of the great contemplatives from its mythic beginnings through individual philosophers' noesis and the revelatory experiences—symbolisms of individual prophets and apostles in the Judaeo-Christian horizon—with comparable *equivalent* events discernible in other civilizational horizons. The differentiating movements are not a simple progression but are marked by complex contracting defections from truth through corruption, concupiscential rebellion, egophany, and various other derailments that structure the dynamics of existence including those mentioned as reductionist and immanentist. The open quest for truth-reality produces no system to end all systems but continues into the present as a living search for order in the various modes of participation identified especially with philosophy and revelation in the West and with the great spiritualists of other traditions such as Confucius, the Buddha, and the Hindu meditatives. The privileging of philosophy does not amount to Eurocentrism but to a recognition of the noetic superiority of the life of *Reason* as it emerges from the whole of human contemplative endeavor evinced over time as indispensable in the process of reality-experienced. Of this singularity Voegelin comments,

[T]he *Analytica Posteriora*, the fundamental work on analytical thinking to this day, was created, not perhaps in China or India, but in Hellas . . . the Europocentrism of position and standards cannot be abandoned by the philosopher of history, because there is nothing he could put in its place. History is made wherever men live, but its philosophy is a Western symbolism. (CW15, 90)

Ellis Sandoz

See also [Comte, Auguste](#); [German Political Thought](#); [Ideology](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [National Socialism](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Totalitarianism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [Utopianism](#)

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Kyle Scott Kyle Scott

Voltaire, François-Marie Arouet

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Voltaire, François-Marie Arouet

François-Marie Arouet Voltaire (1694–1778) is often considered a leading figure in the French Enlightenment as well as the quintessential Frenchman. This characterization seems odd given that he had to live in exile in England between 1726 and 1729 and that he stands apart from many Enlightenment thinkers in his rejection of pure rationalism and embrace of reasoned action that does not attack traditional mores or cultural norms. Thus, Voltaire is a complex figure whose contribution to political theory is not as widely recognized as that of fellow members of the French Enlightenment but is unique and valuable nonetheless.

Voltaire rejected the idea that there could be a rationally constructed political order that could be applied universally. Instead, he embraced the idea that reason could lead to an improved political order but that all reforms would have to be brought about gradually and done within the context of the nation receiving the reforms. For Voltaire, and as suggested by Aristotle, there simply was no one best regime or set of laws since the best was dependent on the character of the people and the condition of the country. Hence, he could support a monarch in France, a parliament in England, or a republic in Geneva. To drive the point home, Voltaire once quipped, when answering why the liberal parliamentary structure in England could not simply be transplanted to the illiberal monarch in Prussia, “Why then are these laws not followed in other countries? Is that not the same as asking why coconuts flourish in India, but not very well in Rome?” (as quoted in Williams 1994, 61).

Voltaire was a liberal but not a utopian one; he was very much a pragmatist, and yet his admiration for the English system is undeniable. Despite his personal preference for the English system, he was unwilling to universalize its superiority. In his essay "Government," Voltaire wrote, "In the end this is what English legislation has achieved: the restoration to all men of all those natural rights of which nearly every monarchy deprives them" (as quoted in Williams 1994, 60).

Voltaire's political views were influenced by his time in England. During his exile, he became familiar with the English system through his close affiliation with the Tory statesman Lord Bolingbroke; the author of *Gulliver's Travels*, Jonathan Swift; Alexander Pope; the Whig merchant Samuel Clarke; and other self-proclaimed Newtonians. Voltaire recognized that the success of the English system was dependent on its unique history, and that although it had become liberal, it had for centuries been the home of tyranny, civil war, slavery, and religious persecution. The end of these practices did not come about because of some newly crafted law or institutional arrangement but only after a long, gradual transformation. The strength of parliament did not come overnight but began more than 500 years before Voltaire's sojourn in Runnymede. What was first established in the Magna Carta was not a strong parliament but a set of aspirational guidelines and principles that would work their way into the political system eventually.

Voltaire did not just admire what England stood for, nor did he think heritage could do it alone, but he recognized that the proper system would need to be put into place to maintain and implement the desired reforms. Thus, he advocated political representation and the separation of powers much in the same way his fellow countryman Montesquieu did (Montesquieu, incidentally, also endorsed gradual reform that respected the history and character of a nation and its people).

An embrace of a separation-of-powers model demonstrates Voltaire's skepticism with regard to the perfectibility of government through rational means. No government could be expected to capture Enlightenment principles in a consistent and predictable manner. Therefore, he viewed a government that could limit the illiberal tendencies of the power hungry to

be the most desirable. This view does not preclude the possibility of an enlightened monarch or liberal democracy, only that—all things being equal—a system like the one he had observed in England was generally the most desirable. As a pragmatist, however, he entertained the possibility that other types of government could also bring about desirable results if they correctly matched the conditions of the country and the people.

Kyle Scott

See also [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [French Enlightenment](#); [French Political Thought](#); Montesquieu, Charles-Louis; [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Separation of Powers](#); [State, Theories of the](#)

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See Economics and Political Thought; Friedman, Milton; Hayek, Friedrich; Liberalism; Neoliberalism; Planning

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War and Political Thought

War and political thought

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War and Political Thought

The starting points in the subject of war have traditionally been Carl von Clausewitz and his seminal work *On War*, which is the only major philosophical discourse on war we have in the modern era, and Sun Tzu's *Art of War*, which is part of the Taoist canon.

From Clausewitz, we derive two received ideas that still dominate military thinking. Not only does war have a nature that never changes over time, but it also has a character that is always changing over time. Clausewitz tells us that it differs from era to era; the Tartars waged war differently from the Romans, and there were even greater differences in the ways nations during the Enlightenment waged war. For Clausewitz, the idea was a heuristic device that helps us to understand that war is protean, and it adapts to its external environment; it changes from culture to culture and within cultures over time.

Clausewitz encouraged us to draw a distinction between the nature of war and its character because of his own philosophical frame of reference. German idealists such as Immanuel Kant and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel set out to invest traditional kinds of knowledge such as religion and history with an essential "core" or "nature." Behind every phenomenon there is a conceptual poetry or essence. Long before that, however, metaphysics, in revealing (to its own satisfaction) the relativity of the world as experienced, had also reasoned out an unconditional reality thanks to which the conditioned reality becomes intelligible for the first time.

The distinction between the nature and character of war is central to modern philosophical thinking on war as a social phenomenon, as opposed to just a historical event. It is also essential to the reasoning of the three most important philosophers to theorize about war, Kant, Hegel, and Martin Heidegger.

Hegel

Like Clausewitz, Hegel gave the French Revolution and the rise of Napoleon a seminal role in the genesis and articulation of his phenomenology of political life. Famously, he glimpsed Napoleon under his window at Jena at the precise moment in which the preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* was being completed. It served as an iconic coincidence. Philosophy had achieved its purpose at the moment at which history approaches its end.

Hegel had seen the force of ideas—the French revolutionary slogan “Liberty, Equality and Fraternity” carried by force of arms across Europe. Napoleon’s very possibility, thought Hegel, taken in its broadest theoretical and empirical sense, marked the fulfillment of humanity’s historical destiny, the story of freedom becoming conscious of itself. He had witnessed the *Geist* of freedom, as well as the *Volkgeist* of the German nation forged in a war of national liberation against Napoleon. From this perspective, he ingeniously, if implausibly, was able to deduce the invention of firearms. Instead of fighting face to face, in hand-to-hand combat, modern soldiers were now prepared to die anonymous deaths, turning personal valor into a more abstract form (Franco 1999, 333). His bold attempt to make war an agent of transcendent history suggested that both the *Volkgeist* and the *Geist* could ultimately be reconciled through the medium of the state, and that war between states could be mediated through international law. In that sense, war could indeed remain an intensely ethical activity.

After all, it was only through finding the true end of their existence in their relationship to the “civil society” that Europe constituted that its respective states could achieve “a life of self-conscious freedom.” In their discourse of war, grounded as it was in reason, not passion, there could be no place for

hatred or revenge, two of the existential emotions that when given unlimited expression make wars so difficult to control.

In short, Hegel took his cue from Niccolò Machiavelli's view that there are two ways of fighting: by means of the law or by means of force. The first belongs to humankind and the second to animals. What distinguished law from force, Hegel added, was that the possibility of peace is retained. Even in war the peace of family and private life is inviolate (Wyschogrod 1985, 130).

And what of Clausewitz? There is no evidence that he attended Hegel's lectures in Berlin and none that he read any of the philosopher's works, most of which were published posthumously by his students from his lecture notes. In any case, his interest was more modest. For Hegel, war could become an instrument of human transcendence; for Clausewitz, war could become an instrument of the preservation of the state system, provided its logic was understood. In other words, while Hegel tried to force the logic of the state to come to terms with the phenomenon of war, Clausewitz tried to make war conform to the needs of the state. This seems to have been the fundamental meaning of his most famous aphorism that war is, or should be, "a continuation of politics by other means." What neither thinker foresaw was the coming of a war without rules. Yet that is precisely what came to pass in the two world wars that harnessed technology to ideology in a particularly lethal fashion.

Heidegger

Karl Marx had been aware of the new challenge the Industrial Revolution had raised: The world was beginning to change within an individual lifetime. Thinking about the future, especially whether the nature of war might change with the advent of new technologies, had become a response to the demand of the times—the need to think through individual survival. But it took Heidegger, a philosopher from the twentieth century, writing in the shadow of the atomic bomb, to take Marx's critique to its furthest conclusion; it was he who introduced the word "technology" into common usage. Before that, the "practical art" or "applied sciences" or

“engineering” was commonly used to designate what we now call “technology.”

Heidegger recognized that the essence of technology is not *technological*. Its essence is the way it changes our relationship with the world, as well as our relationship with others, and that is especially true of its role in war. It gets us to see the world around us differently. Technology is not an artifact; it is a way of *thinking* about the world and our place in it. The Greeks had a more harmonious relationship with nature than we do. Consider, Heidegger invites us, the contrast between an old wooden bridge that lets the river run its preordained course while we cross it in safety and a modern hydroelectric dam that turns the river into a resource to be used as we wish (Young 2001, 38). What interested Heidegger most was not modern technology itself, although he considered it more violent than the ancient: A bulldozer can do more damage than a spade. Ultimately it is the use to which we put it that constitutes our relationship with the world. What is the ground, Heidegger asks, to the violence we do to the world, the violence of a nuclear war, or the everyday violence to nature? For Heidegger, modern war had been reified at Hiroshima in 1945, where its destruction represented the complete triumph of technical instrumental reason. In the late modern era, the will to power has become the standard of all human conduct. The total rationality of means had been accompanied by the total irrationality of the ends, and that included refashioning of matter that made atomic warfare possible.

It was only made possible by atomic physics, the most radical and specialized science of the day. The A-bomb broke with the past, with the Newtonian killing systems, such as ballistics, chemistry, and aeronautics, all of which can be seen as extensions of the gunpowder “revolution” of the sixteenth century. The bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima did not explode because of the blending of chemicals; it exploded because of a humanly engineered change in the nature of matter.

Like every philosopher since Aristotle, modern philosophers believed that the only purpose of war was peace—a better kind of peace, or peace on one’s own terms. It was Kant’s great contribution to that debate to insist that “no state at war with another shall permit such acts of hostility as would

make mutual confidence impossible during a future time of peace” (Humphrey 1983, 129). Reason dictates that we wage war in such a way that ensures that peace remains within our grasp at all times. We should never release passions and hatreds that cannot be contained.

Kant

Kant’s injunction reflected a major change in thinking: The Enlightenment replaced the framework of a common morality with the framework of a common civilization that was sustained by international law and common codes of conduct in war. With the optimism demonstrated by such Enlightenment thinkers as David Hume and Adam Smith, Clausewitz too had no doubt that the Europeans had finally learned an important lesson from their own history:

If . . . civilised nations do not put their prisoners to death, or devastate towns and the countryside, it is because cleverness plays a larger part in their conduct of war and has taught them more effective ways of using force than such a crude expression of instinct. (Heuser 2002, 51)

Indeed, Clausewitz expected that cleverness in political life would continue to increase as societies developed and learned even more. Adam Ferguson had earlier contrasted the “civilised or polished” nations such as his own with the “barbarous or rude” nations of the premodern era. What made the former more civil was their discretionary use of violence. “We have mingled politeness with the use of the sword. We have learned to make war under the stipulations of treaties and cartels and trust to the faith of an enemy whose ruin we contemplate” (Ferguson 1969, 267).

Kant was expressing two ideas here, both of them modern. The first was that we do not become better people, but history and its study do make us better informed. From a reading of history, we know what consequences will follow from acting badly. “Savage” people, by contrast, are history-less—in both senses of the word. Not only do they not make their own history (it is made for them by others), but also they do not make it because they

have no written records and no great historians to instruct them in the ways of the world. Second, the idea that we do not need to separate ethics from politics (in this case, war) stems from the understanding that ethics inheres in the practice of war itself—it is an idea that comes from the political framework of his age. It also emerges in a famous paragraph from *The Philosophy of Right* where Hegel tells us that the origin of the (modern) state as a “self-organising rational and ethical organization” can be traced back to the breakdown of religious unity in the West (Gillespie 1984, 59).

Conclusion

Therefore, ethical constraints no longer came from without (from God) but from within—from politics. The first and most important precondition of the modern concept of the state is the formation of a distinctive language of politics. In other words, for modern politics to be made possible, it was necessary to accept the idea of the state that presupposed that political society was held together solely for political purposes (Pizzorno 1995, 77). To claim that the “political” was merely another name for the “temporal” (the Middle Ages) or the “royal” (the age of Absolutism) would be wrong. The emergence of the “political” we associate with the emergence of the “citizen” (as distinct from the “Christian” or the “subject”). The political sphere is modern and ethical at the same time. Ethics inheres in the political practice of forging and keeping together a state divided by class and conflicting interests. The aim, claimed Marx, was to create an *i llusionische Gemeinschaft*—an illusory society held together by certain foundational myths (Pizzorno 1995, 77).

Unfortunately, both world wars tested not only the effectiveness of armies in the field but also the viability of entire societies (those “imagined communities,” as Benedict Anderson calls them) and their way of life. What occurred was what Clausewitz had predicted would happen if combat were no longer guided by “the will of a leading intelligence,” but if war were to become “its own independent will.” The outcome would be “a complete, untrammelled, absolute manifestation of violence,” as was to prove the case in the war-torn twentieth century.

Christopher Coker

See also [Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich](#); [Heidegger, Martin](#); [Humanitarian Intervention](#); [Kant, Immanuel](#); [Pacifism](#); [Terrorism](#); [Totalitarianism](#)

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Washington, George

George Washington (1732–99), known to his contemporaries as the Father of His Country, has also been called the Indispensable Man of the American founding. Indeed, his public career spanned the second half of the eighteenth century. During that time, Washington became the most visible embodiment of the political thought of the American Enlightenment.

Washington's public career began in 1754 when, as a Virginia militia officer serving the British crown, he started a skirmish with French forces on the Pennsylvania frontier that eventuated in the French and Indian War between Britain and France. In 1758, he was elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses, where he remained until 1774. Denied a royal commission in the British army, Washington resigned from the Virginia militia shortly before his marriage to the widow Martha Custis in early 1759 to concentrate on planting and public service, including politics and the Anglican vestry. During the decade 1759–69, he continued these pursuits. By 1769, Washington the burgess had become disaffected with aspects of British rule, and he began to support economic and political resistance. He was elected to the First and Second Continental Congresses in 1774 and 1775, and served as Commander of the Continental Army from 1775 to the end of the Revolutionary War in 1783. Washington resigned his commission in December 1783 and returned to his plantation, Mount Vernon. Worried that the confederation of newly independent American states was weak and unstable, Washington reluctantly accepted appointment to the Federal (Constitutional) Convention in the summer of 1787, over which he

presided. After working behind the scenes for ratification of the Constitution, Washington was unanimously elected the first president of the United States early in 1789. He served two terms and chose not to stand for reelection in 1796, when he issued his farewell address, a compendium of eighteenth-century American political thought. Washington died suddenly at Mount Vernon in December 1799. During his public career, Washington embodied the three dominant political philosophies of the American Enlightenment era: classical republicanism, Enlightenment liberalism, and Protestant Christianity.

To many, Washington uncannily resembled the ancient Roman general-turned-farmer Cincinnatus. In behavior and even appearance, Washington modeled classical republican political and ethical virtues. His seeming disinterestedness, demonstrated by his resignation from the Continental Army, his professed unwillingness to assume the presidency, and his retirement after two presidential terms were supreme examples of his apparent reluctance to hold power. Washington's emphasis on the public good, and political happiness as the end of government, were Aristotelian. His conceptions of individual and corporate happiness were also strikingly similar to those of the Roman Seneca, whose *Morals*, abridged and in English translation, were evidently studied by Washington. His emphasis on disinterested public virtue, or willingness to subordinate personal happiness for the public good, was reminiscent of the virtue praised by Cicero, the first father of his country (*pater patriae*) in Rome.

Washington added the political elements of Enlightenment liberalism to his classical republican political morality and theory. He invoked principles from British liberals such as John Locke and Algernon Sydney to argue against the administration of George III from the mid-1760s to the mid-1770s. By 1774, Washington was labeling administration policies "not only repugnant to natural right, but subversive of the laws and constitution of Great Britain itself" (letter to Bryan Fairfax, August 24, 1774). During the Revolution and his presidency, Washington sought to secure the natural rights recognized by Enlightenment liberals to "life, liberty, and property," as he put it, for the American people.

Washington was a lifelong Anglican, although the evidence for his orthodoxy is ambiguous. Even so, he was a thoroughly religious man who in his political rhetoric quoted the Bible more than any other single source, borrowed liberally from the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer*, and was firmly convinced that a benign Providence ruled the affairs of nations and had presided over the birth of the United States. His Circular to the States (1783) stressed the social benefits of “the pure and benign light of Revelation” and recommended imitation of the characteristics of “the Divine Author of our blessed Religion” for Americans’ political well-being. In his farewell address, Washington memorably insisted that “[o]f all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, Religion and morality are indispensable supports.”

That Farewell Address contained the core principles of Washington’s political philosophy: union, liberty, and self-government under the Constitution, administered with virtue as an example to the world, all under the superintendence of a benevolent Providence. These principles collectively made up the political polestar of his 50-year public career.

Jeffrey H. Morrison

See also [American Political Thought](#); [Eighteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Liberalism](#); [Republicanism](#)

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Clive E. Hill Clive E. Hill

Webb, Sidney and Beatrice

Webb, sidney and beatrice

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Webb, Sidney and Beatrice

In the development of both reformist socialism and British social historiography, Sidney Webb (1859–1947) and Beatrice Potter Webb (1858–1943) were significant individuals, as well as being a married couple (from 1892), intellectual partners from slightly earlier, and the joint authors of many encyclopedic volumes. Their contribution to modern political thought included important reflections on the relationship among liberalism, social democracy, and communism, and on education, public services, and industrial democracy.

The Webbs first met in 1890 and soon established a strong political rapport. Sidney received his early education in London, Switzerland, and Germany, but his lower middle-class family was insufficiently affluent for him to study as a full-time undergraduate, and so, in 1886, he completed a part-time, external degree in law at the University of London while working as a civil servant. He subsequently became a full-time writer. In contrast, Beatrice Potter was the largely self-educated daughter of a wealthy businessman, who achieved financial independence thanks to a significant inheritance from her father in 1892, and she was originally less inclined toward party politics. Beatrice is usually seen as the leader of the partnership, and both her early writings on poverty and her first book, *The Co-operative Movement in Britain* (1891), are classics of their particular genres. However, Sidney was a notable figure in Liberal and Labour politics for more than 50 years; produced a significant, independent body of writing on many subjects; and in later life (the 1920s and 1930s) served as a Labour

MP, a peer (Baron Passfield), and a government minister. He established himself as a significant political writer in the 1880s, largely thanks to his association with the Fabian Society, writing many pamphlets on their behalf, including the most successful early Fabian Tract, *Facts for Socialists* (1887). While the young Beatrice worked closely with Herbert Spencer, Sidney was influenced by another important strand in Victorian social science, and concluded that the moral goals of positivism were better expressed through limited collectivism and municipal socialism than the original Comtean utopia. Subsequently, Sidney served as a London County Councillor (1892–1910), and his interest in secondary and technical education indicated a concern for “culture,” as part of “the good life,” which was often lost on his critics.

Within the Fabian Society, Sidney argued for a policy of “permeation,” which involved seeking to convert the Liberal Party (and other nonsocialists) to various collectivist policies on “practical grounds.” He worked in uneasy tension with “labourists,” who favored closer links between the Society and the organized labor movement. The Webbs originally assumed that the “zeitgeist” favored their pragmatic brand of collectivist politics, but the failure of their campaign to reform the Poor Law (1909–13) led them to reassess the strength of capitalist interests and to look more sympathetically on trade unions. They joined the Labour Party in 1914 and subsequently played a major role in the debate about the 1918 Party constitution, which included the famous (but ambiguous) “Clause Four,” which summarized the parameters of party policy on public ownership.

Webbian history—for example, *English Local Government* (11 volumes, 1906–29)—always had a strong political dimension and was distinguished by thorough empirical work and a sophisticated conception of sociological function, which owed much to Spencer’s synthetic philosophy, although the Webbs disputed his laissez-faire conclusions. Early Fabianism involved a deep respect for the unitary sovereignty of a democratized Parliament as the single legitimate agency of legislative change, and the Webbs subsequently became involved in the debate with the “Guild Socialists” about pluralistic socialism in their “corporatist utopia,” *A Constitution for the Socialist Commonwealth of Great Britain* (1920), where this approach was

questioned. Finally, after the collapse of the second Labour government in 1931, the Webbs became increasingly intrigued and impressed by the Soviet Union and produced the classic text of Western intellectual “fellow-traveling,” *Soviet Communism*, in 1935.

The overall contribution to Western political thought made by the Webbs was by no means original, but their ideas about the organization of social services and the application of the concepts of representative democracy and pluralism to economic life are still worth studying today. Webbian socialism, in all its manifestations, was economically egalitarian but politically elitist; by those on the far Left, it has always been seen as a reformed capitalism and not really socialist at all.

Clive E. Hill

See also [Democratic Theory](#); [Fabianism](#); [Guild Socialism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Planning](#); [Pluralism](#); [Progress](#); [Social Democracy](#); [Socialism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [Utopianism](#)

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Duncan Kelly Duncan Kelly

Weber, Max

Weber, Max

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Weber, Max

Max Weber (1864–1920) was born in Erfurt, Germany, on April 26, 1864, and died on June 14, 1920, in Munich, having inspired many through his academic teaching and practical example. Weber's world was a world in flux, and in this he was certainly a man of his times. What many historians have interpreted as an age of bourgeois nervousness or even illness seems apposite to someone whose daily functioning often embodied a mixture of drugs, rigid self-control, sexual dysfunction, and dramatic (even dramaturgic) energy, and who was able to amass a body of work in a short lifetime that surpasses many who might work for twice as long in both range and depth (cf. Marianne Weber 1995; Radkau 2005/2009; Mommsen and Osterhammel 1987). He straddled the technical fields of ancient and agrarian history, medieval trading companies, the historical and conceptual study of law and political economy, and the origins of music, and he conducted path-breaking surveys on rural labor and the psychophysics of industrial work, planning further studies of the press and the state. He also wrote volumes of (often tortuous) prose on methodological problems of interpretation, undertook major defenses of academic freedom, and learned enough Russian to draft political journalism first on the 1905 revolution and then on the revolution of 1917, the former appearing in the major journal he co-edited. And in that journal, he premiered a dazzlingly provocative thesis about the affinity between capitalism and the so-called ethic of Protestantism (Ghosh 2008).

That text, although still much misunderstood, confirmed his status as a heroic founding father of sociology. Yet he lectured and was primarily employed in the fields of finance and political economy and only toward the end of his life thought of taking a chair in sociology. His move toward an obvious and recognizable “sociology,” although he was always interested in the forms of social action, occurred only late in life. It came after he had devised and constructed the framework for an updated handbook on social economy [*Grundriss der Sozialökonomik*] that he wrote much of himself, after conceptualizing a sprawling work on *Economy and Society* [*Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*], and writing as a practically syndicated journalist on German politics. For the study of political thought, what is of most obvious interest is either Weber’s own politics or his hugely polemical lectures on the vocation of the scientist and the politician (Weber 1946, 1994). It is the latter that this article focuses on. For although he thought himself a signal failure at politics, his reflections on the topic are among his most luminous, and they act as a filter not only to explain his broad thoughts on social and political action but also as a lens through which to reflect on his own political theory (Hennis 2000a, 2000b).

Politics and the Political

The idea of a discrete sphere of the political is a Germanic idiom, which although it has become famous through the work of Carl Schmitt, was actually of central importance to Weber (Kelly 2003). This centrality stems from his attempt to delineate the sphere of the political as part of a desire to anatomize and theorize politics within the wider sphere of social action that concerned him. This focus lends his work a powerful conceptual as well as contextual focus (Beetham 1985). Indeed, Max Weber’s celebrated lecture on the vocation of politics, given during the fiery days of the Bavarian Revolution in late January 1919, sought to do what had by then become typical of his work. He first tried to becalm his audience (or readers) by disabusing them of any apparently political subtext to the sober and scholarly aspects of his theme. What constitutes the proper sphere of politics is a subject with a history, he suggested, and that history can be traced in the rise of the modern, autonomous, bureaucratic state whose rational legal authority has, for the time being, trumped earlier forms of charismatic or traditional political leadership. The central question arising

from this view concerns both why and how this particular form has come to be favored, in what contexts, and with what implications. For if there are certain “objective” tasks that politics in general, and political actors in particular, have to accomplish, then we shall want to know to what extent political form helps or hinders their completion.

Having established that the number of political forms that any “state” (or political association [*Gemeinschaft*]) can take are finite, Weber’s principal attention focused on the specific demands of politics. It involves leadership, and the practice of politics to a large extent must therefore provide an appropriate mechanism of leadership selection. Therefore, political form primarily matters to the extent that certain forms are better able to produce leaders whose skills are appropriate to the demands of political action under particular forms of society. For example, he celebrated the nineteenth-century English Parliament as a school of hard training, where prospective leaders had to acquire the basic skills of politics through committee work, legislative diligence, and political maneuverings. This slow boring of hard boards became a standard against which to measure the failings of contemporary German parliamentarism. For although the sphere of the political was the sphere of leadership, its tasks for Weber also included the need to maintain the honor and glory of the German nation-state (Mommsen 1984). This position was a standard but also a Machiavellian-sounding claim, even if *fortuna* was occasionally redescribed to suggest that the German nation was destined to become a nation of masters. If that claim was accepted, then certain political consequences flowed into Weber’s Nietzschean updating of politics, which can present itself as an obnoxious form of racial and Social Darwinism. Yet this implication was at odds in general with the way he approached questions of race and nation. The fact that these tensions coexist in his scholarly and political work illustrate precisely how the demands of political judgment produce and express values distinct from a more sober, academic calculation of facts.

Weber therefore thought that the principal tasks of politics, once the particular shape of the political sphere had been understood and the basic necessities of practical life were established, had to do with the development of a people and with the cultivation of a particular sort of character. This character type would be suited to the demands of modern

democratic politics, which, however, would have to be reconciled with the specialized demands of a modern and disenchanted world. Democracy was therefore both a problem and a solution to some otherwise intractable problems of politics, and indeed for some time, Weber toyed with the idea of making democracy another of his ideal-types of rule, alongside charismatic, traditional, and rational-legal authority. Yet although democracy could not be avoided in an era of mass politics, Weber recognized that democracy facilitated demagoguery. Demagoguery could be made safe for modern politics only by building charisma into the structural foundations of democratic politics. Even this move, however, came with problems attached, for it was not clear that modern parliamentary democracy could produce leaders with even the minimal skill required. Weber in fact ultimately despaired of the fate of democracy in Germany after he had given his lecture, and he came to prefer instead a view of democracy combined with plebiscitary leadership. For this reason, many have come to think of him as a “realist” political thinker.

Weber and “Realism”

The idea of “realism” has two distinct valences in contemporary thought. One implies a classical view of politics as the hard task of rule, necessarily by elites, within which politics is viewed as a continual struggle for power. This might often spill over into war and violence between sovereign states that exist in what is otherwise a tense, interrelated, but anarchic world. A different interpretation concerns more recent political theory, wherein “realism” has come to represent an opposition to the kind of “ideal theory” inspired by the political philosophy of John Rawls, in which technical political questions are bracketed off from irresolvable metaphysical disagreements. Although the first vision is principally associated with a piecemeal incorporation of certain political thinkers into a canon of international-relations scholarship and thematic concerns, and the second with normative political philosophy, both feature a heavily state-centered vision. In this respect, at least, they both hold closely to Weber’s focus, for his political thinking derived from reflections on the nature of the state as the body possessing a monopoly on the legitimate force within a particular territory. This claim, as much as any of the pieces of apparently timeless wisdom offered by Thucydides, Niccolò Machiavelli, or Thomas Hobbes, is

the basis of Weber's realism. He wanted the grand historical sweep as well as the particular normative detail, a sober assessment of the facts within a general theory of political and social action. In brief, he wanted both sorts of "realism." History, he suggested, showed the importance of power and the "irreducible" element of domination [*Herrschaft*] present in any human social relationship, so that political relationships are those that present a certain form of "legitimate" *Herrschaft* within this wider framework of social action. Only by understanding this perceived rightfulness of rule could one look at political questions with a cool objectivity.

This coolness is a natural disposition of the properly political leader. But it signifies at least three things, the first of which is a skill in applying knowledge to practical tasks. This application incorporated classical wisdom offered by ancient political writers such as Plato and Aristotle, for whom leadership required both the political knowledge to rule in general (*politike*) and the practical wisdom (*phronesis*) to know how to rule well in a particular context. Second, the requisite coolness of leaders embodies what Weber referred to as the "tragic" character of all action generally, and political action especially. This focus has been somewhat neutralized in contemporary political philosophy, which refers to the technical and anemic question of whether there really are moral dilemmas at all. The implication is that if there are, then simply recalibrating one's moral compass might allow them to be rendered meaningless. Value pluralism is a muted reflection of this vision, although as some historians have noted, it is a set of ideas with a classical genealogy that is certainly germane to Weber's concerns. It suggests that there are always moral remainders in decision making and that, therefore, there are likely to be serious remainders in political decision making of a consequential character. Here, many equally valued goods have to be traded unequally against one another, with losses noted and consequences dealt with. Weber's account of this sort of dilemma has the tenor of existential provocation as much as sober assessment. The struggle for the soul of the politician could become literally a matter of life and death. The politician would have to separate his or her—mostly "his" in the Western political tradition—own personality and character from his office, but at the same time use his character to pursue a particular cause. He would have to recognize that ideals would be compromised in the grinding realities of day-to-day political life, and in doing so, he must be

able to live with the consequences both as man and as politician. Few would realistically be able to cope, which is why the focus on training and discipline was so important to Weber. He demanded a twin focus to reconcile the demands of man and politician, and to underpin his celebrated (if theoretically and practically awkward) discussion of an ethics of disposition [*Gesinnung*] and of responsibility [*Verantwortung*]. The former relates to a motivating cause, and the latter to a sober realism in the face of its pursuit, which the vocational politician as opposed to the mere romantic politician, ideologue, or dilettante should take into account.

Putting these ethics in combination thus constitutes something like a third strand of Weberian realism. The politician required both “cause” and objectivity, cool judgment to contain and constrain hot passion, and a sense of how to try and pursue that cause in the face of the necessary compromises, dead-ends, false dawns, tragic conflicts, and unintended consequences that politics provokes. This combination of passion and judgment embodies the ideal political character for Weber, and although it rejects political absolutism absolutely, it nevertheless represents a kind of absolute ideal that the man of vocation has to follow. For Weber, compromise, on the one hand, and the decisive pursuit of national tasks, on the other, went hand in hand. This coupling meant that certain political pursuits were, or should be, already off the table. For example, he vehemently rejected the absolutist tendencies of political radicalism as much as he did the views of those who would reject politics completely. In his lectures on politics, this stance was bound to disappoint a radical student audience. He knew that his savage attacks on Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht as political infants were highly charged, as both had been murdered less than a fortnight previously, but this critique was of a piece with his wider position. He thought that politics required a certain view of the world, and what one might today think of as monist (or monomaniacal) political worldviews, whether revolutionary or eschatological, were incompatible with a realistic assessment of politics. The ethics of the Sermon on the Mount, he added in a wry nod to Leo Tolstoy, was a thoroughly honorable ideal, and it had moved mountains in the past. As a political ideal for a godless world, however, it was literally (to say nothing of metaphysically) hopeless. To engage in such a religious rejection of the world was the sort of thing that no self-respecting politician could ever

countenance. One could not turn away from evil in politics, as Weber accused various of his colleagues of doing, for the real politician had to stare it down and match its force with something similar or better. To reject the world as it is required a self-confidence and self-consciousness that few possessed, but it often involved a juvenile form of hubris, or so he suggested. Following an ethics of disposition in fields apart from politics might be enough, but because politics needed responsible conduct that benefitted huge populations, such simplicity was unhelpful. Nevertheless, Weber's particular form of realism, particularly his focus on the relationship between character and vocation, had much more general purchase. He was actually making a general point about the relationship between character and action for anyone who had a passion for life, and this point leads on to a further dimension of Weber's political thought.

The Political Life

If the political life in its most obvious sense is the life led by vocational politicians, Weber's vision of politics has a broader focus than just the figure of the political actor. It suggests, in fact, two angles of vision. One is the exemplary character of political action itself. In balancing the twin ethics of conviction and responsibility, in making that infamous plea that in standing here he can do no other, the politician of vocation lives for and not from politics, and his presentation of self is both heroic and ideal. A second angle focuses more generally on the appropriate relationship between a character type (in this case, the politician) and the particular sphere of engagement (politics). Although this particular illustration is specific, the structure of the argument can be generalized: Social action [*Soziale Handeln*] generally requires an agent to calibrate his or her particular character with the demands of the specific life-order [*Lebensordnung*] or vocation he or she wishes to pursue. Thus, in this second sense, the life led politically might not necessarily refer specifically to a life in politics but could simply designate the appropriate balancing between character and vocation that all agents must ideally seek if they are to find meaning in the world. Distinguishing between the political life and the life led politically seems to fit with Weber's general approach to historical study through the use of "ideal-type" examples, which could generalize abstractly from the mass of particular details, to throw into sharp relief specific issues and

interpretations. Such objectivity was not a form of neutrality because even the most abstract exercise in concept formation requires the analyst to choose what will and what will not constitute appropriate evidence and signal meaning. It is, rather, an illustrative device designed to govern otherwise chaotic material, and the vocation lectures fit well into this perspective. So too does his cognate recognition of the unreality of the figure of *homo economicus*, for example, at the same time as he praises its analytical or heuristic usefulness.

Applied to particular individuals, this view can have valuable analytical purchase. Thus, the figure of the vocational politician might receive some sort of embodiment in certain figures (perhaps Pericles, Otto von Bismarck, or William Gladstone, to use Weber's favored examples), but in a broader sense, the vocational politician is itself an ideal-type and so too are the scientist, the artist, the musician, and so forth. In fact, in Weber's other great "vocation" lecture, concerned with the vocation of the scientific life [*Wissenschaft*], he is clear that the scientist must reconcile his own character to the demands of an intellectual life, and that he cannot pursue political goals directly even though he might, more or less consciously, contribute the new instrumental understandings of how those goals could be achieved. One must not use the academic lectern as if it were a pulpit from which to try and persuade an audience as to what they should think, but instead one must aim only to impart the particular facts of a situation and the various theoretical ways in which one might understand and interpret them. Lying behind this stance was a contemporary rejection of the so-called "socialists of the chair" [*Kathedersozialisten*], which culminated in a passionate defense of academic freedom and the plight of his friend, Robert Michels, whose politics he would himself come to disagree with radically. The vocational demand for truth and intellectual integrity had to stand above political posturing by academics. Weber seemed to foresee the disputes over "political correctness" of a century later.

Like the politician and other character types, scientists have their own inner demons or causes to serve, and once again, only a few possess enough awareness and ability to come close to the ideal of the man (or woman) of vocation. If what Weber had to say was necessarily disappointing to his audience, it was both because he refused to either proselytize or offer easy

answers. Instead, as a scholar, he posed questions and offered interpretations. He could not resist laying out the general challenge, though, of asking how his audience would maintain its own character in the cold-hearted bureaucratic future that lay ahead. In so doing, Weber illustrated a tension at the heart of his architectonic focus on the relationship between character and vocation. By asking about the possibility of upholding character under the freedom-destroying bureaucratic ravages of rational-legal capitalism and the state, Weber brings out his own difficulty in upholding a fact-value distinction he sought academically to maintain. Even if one thinks it possible to uphold the distinction, Weber so often directly contradicts his own tenets, even when talking about dry methodological issues, that it is difficult, without stretching the evidence to the breaking point, to view him as a wholly successful neo-Kantian, as some scholars do. His approach is more traditional, in fact, and much more in tune with an idea of political realism. Indeed, Weber's politics seemed to impinge at all times, even as he endeavored to separate politics, morality, and analysis largely because all of his works took their cue from thoroughly practical problems.

He rejected idealism in all forms, sardonically suggesting that one could follow either Hegel or the way of thinking opened up by political economy. Weber's way of treating things was derived from the classics, from law and political economy, and most especially from the legacy of Karl Marx and Friedrich Nietzsche, neither of whom any modern scholar could hope to avoid, or so he said. Weber followed Nietzsche into an examination of his increasingly specialized, nihilistic world and looked for practical resolutions that did not necessarily require resorting to some kind of superman [*Übermensch*]. His recourse to plebiscitary leadership democracy, in the eyes of many, suggests a failure to resolve the problem, but this criticism is not entirely right because he also followed Marx in seeing the condition of the working class as a central problem both of and for modern mass-based politics. Weber's conclusions suggested that sensible political leadership, rather than revolution, might provide answers, through educating citizens and adapting charisma to democracy. Because he rejected the conclusions and prescriptions of historical materialism while prizing it as a method, the importance of Marx to his thinking is often misjudged.

Combining Weber's political and intellectual radicalism with something approaching an ancient sense of politics might even lead us to locate him in the company of what many today would think of as republican political criticism. An ancient sense of politics according to Weber, though, has more to do with maintaining honor and *fama*, reputation and credit, statesman-like wisdom, than avoiding domination or arbitrary power. He showed no consistent concern over the effects of domination on social policy or social politics [*Sozial politik*]. Given his Machiavellian view of the necessity of politics, of the judgment of consequences rather than of intentions, of the capriciousness of fortune, and of the hard task of keeping a straight course under modern conditions, a politics based on good intentions and the avoidance of domination was no politics at all. Such naïve hope, he argued, simply left the masses open to manipulation by the worst forms of charismatic demagoguery without any plausible defenses, and it left political leaders weakened when the inevitability of compromise, defeat, and rejection naturally came around. What was likely to become of a modern bureaucratic politics in the West he did not know, but he saw its origins as unique, as derived from what modern political scientists came to refer to as a specific path-dependency. The specificities of capitalism as a cultural form engaged Weber's interest precisely for these reasons, and his political thought represents one of the most profound attempts to come to terms with its implications, its limits, and its possibilities (Scaff 1989). His thoughts equally provide a legacy with which we have yet to fully come to terms.

Duncan Kelly

See also [Democratic Theory](#); [German Political Thought](#); [Methodology of Political Thought](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Richard H. Bell Richard H. Bell

Weil, Simone

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Weil, Simone

A significant political philosopher of the twentieth century despite her short life, Simone Weil (1909–43) chronicled the rise of fascism in the 1920s and 1930s and turned critical attention to the concepts of oppression, human compassion, and the need for justice. Her life and work project her uncommon insights into our common life. She was a profoundly original political thinker and educator. *Welfare State, Theories of the Whose Body of Work* is moderately large. Her most sustained and politically provocative works are *The Need for Roots* and *Oppression and Liberty*, while the most personal and penetrating are *Waiting for God* and essays titled “Are We Struggling for Justice” and “The Iliad, or the Poem of Force,” and several essays collected in *Selected Essays* (1934–43).

Although born a Jew, Weil writes that, “From earliest childhood I have had the Christian notion of charity for one’s neighbor, to which I gave the name of justice, as the Gospel does in several places and which is so fine” (Avery 2008, 22, and the preface to Bell 1998, xii).

Weil makes us acutely aware of human abuse of power and the resulting fragile nature of our civic order; she reminds us of the suffering and injustice that accompany our having abandoned any spiritual roots that may have earlier informed our moral and political thinking. Some 50 years after Weil’s death, Václav Havel, writer and president of the Czech Republic, lamented our loss of a spiritual language in which to frame our political discourse. He argued that we have all but destroyed our ability to talk of

politics and public policy in any transcendent idiom. Weil, along with some contemporary thinkers like Havel, provides us with a new, broadly spiritual way of casting our moral and political discourse as it impinges on policy and daily life. It is this reformulation of moral and political discourse and action in a spiritual framework that distinguishes Simone Weil's writing from most others.

In her final London writings, Simone Weil says that the first duty of education is to remind its children "ceaselessly" to be attentive "in order to be just." Attention is primarily an individual act, while justice necessarily involves human relationships at various levels of order and responsibility among their members. Weil would likely critique our rapid-paced, digitized, commercialized society *because* our capacity for attention seems to have greatly diminished. In our haste, we have all but lost the art of listening and attending to one another, and justice and the quality of our civic life are victims of this diminishment.

Attention is one of Simone Weil's hallmarks; it manifests itself in compassion, which in turn evolves toward a new virtue of justice, in which the work of justice goes hand in hand with compassion, which go hand in hand with trust mercy, development, and reconciliation. Unfortunately, Simone Weil's death came early. She refused to eat more than the poorest of her fellow French brothers and sisters were rationed during the war. She died of malnutrition.

Richard H. Bell

See also [Fascism](#); [French Political Thought](#); [Havel, Václav](#); [Justice](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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Simon Birnbaum Simon Birnbaum

Welfare State, Theories of the

Welfare state, theories of the

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Welfare State, Theories of the

Many of the central building blocks of today's economically advanced welfare states were put into place in the late nineteenth century and consolidated in the first decades of the twentieth century. It was, however, during the long period of sustained economic growth between the 1950s and 1970s that these arrangements expanded rapidly and came into maturity. T. H. Marshall (1950), in one of the most influential theoretical contributions of this period, described the emerging welfare state as the key to full citizenship rights for all members of society.

Marshall famously distinguished among three parts of citizenship, the first two of which were civil rights and political rights. The developing welfare state now added the third element, universal *social* rights, to the status of citizenship. One of the central tasks in early theories of the welfare state was to identify the most fundamental driving forces behind the development of social citizenship in the form of rights to income protection and social services such as education, healthcare, and housing.

The Rise of the Welfare State: Economy-Driven Accounts

One influential theory, advanced from the late 1950s, emphasized the importance of structural changes associated with industrialism. Some authors, such as Harold Wilensky (1975), stressed how economic growth

and demographic developments—a higher life expectancy and a larger proportion of older people in the population—led to a greater demand and capacity for public pensions. Others similarly emphasized the many new social risks associated with the industrial society and the needs of the economy for a well-trained labor force. In short, the welfare state was explained as a functional response to economic development.

Neomarxist explanations for the rise of the welfare state shared this emphasis on structural economic conditions. In these theories, however, welfare-state expansion was interpreted in light of capitalism's systemic needs and inherent contradictions. Capitalism, it was argued, must provide conditions for the accumulation of private capital but at the same time legitimize its defining feature of private ownership of the means of production. In the analysis of James O'Connor (1973), the welfare state served this dual need effectively. Although the capitalist welfare state led to undeniable improvements for wage-earners, it was also associated with new forms of repression and social control. Explaining the power dynamics of the welfare state required understanding that it helped to keep the workers in check and avoided the demand for more thorough forms of social transformation that would threaten the interests of the ruling classes.

However, a number of authors found these types of theory deficient or incomplete. How do we, for example, account for the fact that countries facing similar economic conditions seemed to develop in so very different directions? The preceding theories seemed to explain the welfare state as a more or less deterministic reaction to impersonal economic forces. By contrast, attempts to characterize and explain the differences between different welfare states often led to a shift of emphasis from economic development to the role of political movements and politics more broadly.

How and Why Do Welfare States Differ? Welfare Regimes and Working-Class Mobilization

In *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (1990), Gøsta Esping-Anderson introduced a highly influential typology that remains useful (if partly contested) for describing some of the key dividing lines and development

trajectories of different welfare states. He argued that the welfare states of the OECD countries could be neatly categorized into three broad regime types. The *liberal*, broadly market-based regime, associated with the Anglo-Saxon countries, provides relatively low, universal transfers and/or means-tested social assistance-based payments under strict conditions of eligibility. It connects security tightly to market participation and ascribes great importance to private forms of income protection and social services.

The *conservative* regime type, mainly associated with continental Europe and strongly shaped by religious movements and institutions, combines corporatist structures of welfare-state security—reflecting existing patterns of labor-market stratification—with the encouragement of traditional family arrangements. Finally, the *social-democratic* regime type, represented by the Scandinavian countries, is committed to relatively generous universal transfers and comprehensive state-subsidized public services. Two important aspects of the last type stand out. It emphasizes family and employment policies in support of women's labor-market participation. It also systematically incorporates the middle classes among the beneficiaries of the welfare state, thereby limiting the demand for private services and social-insurance arrangements.

The shift toward a movement-centered explanation of welfare-state development is well exemplified by Walter Korpi's *power-resources model*. Even in a capitalist democracy, there is, he argued, significant room for trade unions and parties of the political left to shape the decisions of the state through the "democratic class struggle." Indeed, the differences between welfare states in the levels of taxation and economic inequality could, essentially, be explained through the differences in *working-class mobilization* and its impact on the power resources available to labor and capital, respectively.

Similarly, Esping-Andersen argued that the most developed welfare states were those of the social-democratic regime type. "Decommodification" was identified as the central indicator of social citizenship, i.e., the extent to which a person "can maintain a livelihood without reliance on the market." Esping-Andersen concluded that the social-democratic regime type

achieved the highest degree of de-commodification and, so, linked welfare-state development tightly to the influence of social democracy.

Another important theme of theories on the impact of movements and their representation on political outcomes concerns the extent to which different welfare states developed in a (to use Helga Hernes's [1987] expression) "women-friendly" direction, and the role played by women and women's movements to serve this end.

Other contributions defended the importance of politics differently by examining the impact of the *political institutions* within which agents and movements operate. "Institutionalists" of various brands, such as Theda Skocpol (1992), aimed to show how state institutions—with their degree of centralization, the presence of checks and balances, the possibility of smaller parties to gain political influence, etc.—contributed importantly to shape the development of welfare states, as well as the balance of power between different groups. For example, the ways in which *electoral systems* create varying opportunities and obstacles for less-advantaged groups to mobilize, form majorities, and vote, may account for many of the differences between welfare regimes.

Is the Welfare State Desirable? Social Justice and the Critique from the Right

An important issue in theoretical debates over the welfare state is, of course, whether welfare-state expansion is desirable from the point of view of social justice and, if so, when and why. The most systematic attempt at justifying efforts to reduce social and economic inequality during these years of expansion was offered by John Rawls, a North American philosopher.

In his influential book *A Theory of Justice* (1971), Rawls combined a vigorous case for the protection of basic liberties and antidiscrimination measures with the argument that inequality of social and economic life prospects could be justified only if they served the interests of the least advantaged in society. In particular, Rawls pointed to the limitations of

arguments about desert by drawing our attention to the fact that we did not choose the family or social class in which we were born, or the talents with which we were endowed. At the same time, however, Rawls also argued that inequalities may sometimes offer useful incentives and thus that an economy with some inequalities would be preferable to more strictly egalitarian arrangements.

Since the mid-1970s, with the oil crises in 1973 and 1979 as key events, the stability of the postwar consensus in favor of the welfare state began to crumble. In this climate of a general slowdown in economic growth and high levels of unemployment, normative theories associated with libertarian and conservative perspectives gained increasing influence. The works of Friedrich A. Hayek (1960) and his followers provided important sources of criticism against the welfare state.

Hayek was not opposed to all forms of redistribution, but he warned against the consequences of lending the state bureaucracy the discretionary powers needed to apply fine-grained and discriminatory distinctions based on “social justice,” such as criteria of desert or equality. Hence, realizing some of the aims associated with the welfare state would concentrate powers in the hands of the state in ways that were bound to collide with individual liberty. Robert Nozick’s *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (1974) developed a libertarian conception, challenging Rawls’s theory, based on the idea of universal rights to self-ownership. He argued that redistributive taxation of labor income violated these rights and was comparable with forced labor.

Some lines of criticism against the welfare state from the right were less concerned about the dangers of uncontrollable bureaucracy or the size of the state than the ways in which welfare programs were designed. Lawrence Mead has argued in a number of influential works, including *Beyond Entitlement* (1986), that current problems of poverty had less to do with the lack of material resources than with the social problems of the “dysfunctional poor.” Specifically, Mead held that welfare programs with lax or no conditions led to dependency and helplessness and so would do nothing to address the reluctance (or lack of capacity) to use available options for work. His prescription was that these causes of poverty were best addressed by linking financial support to behavioral conditions and

supervision, primarily in the form of requirements to work (or prepare for work) to promote responsibility and competence. This kind of thinking was reflected in the welfare reforms of the centrist-liberal Clinton Administration in the United States in the 1990s.

Austerity, Restructuring, and the Resilience of the Welfare State

Even though the general trend toward expansion gradually came to an end during the 1970s and '80s, theories differ in their assessment of whether the development of North American and European welfare states in the past two decades should essentially be described as retrenchment or restructuring. Some theories about economic globalization argued that increasing capital mobility would make lower taxes unavoidable. Theories of postindustrialism emphasized the importance of the shift from manufacturing to services, and the ways in which the differences in productivity growth between these sectors seems to make the funding of welfare services while maintaining wage equality more difficult. Arguments about aging populations and demographic imbalances seemed to lead in the same direction of austerity, thereby leaving limited room for maneuvering through independent political choices in individual countries.

Contrary to some influential predictions of such theories, however, several authors—such as Paul Pierson (2001)—documented the remarkable resilience of many welfare states, and a number of mechanisms through which they have tended to generate stable political support and survive, even in countries where politicians were explicitly committed to reduce the welfare state. While these theories differ in their analyses and conclusions, they were all part of a new shift of focus, this time away from agents (such as parties and other movements) and back to structural circumstances. Thus, many influential theories on this stage of austerity shared the implication that the balance of power between specific movements was ascribed a more limited role for the explanation of different development routes.

Feminist Perspectives and the Challenge of Sustainability

One of the most striking aspects of welfare-state restructuring over the past few decades has been the change in women's labor-market participation and the different ways in which welfare policy has shaped this ongoing reconfiguration of the relations among states, markets, and families. In this context, scholars of gender and politics have argued that welfare-state arrangements have sometimes played a key role in promoting women's personal independence and have contributed to greater economic and social equality between men and women. However, they have also revealed the gendered bias of key concepts in the welfare-state literature and have examined how welfare states have reflected and often reinforced gender inequalities.

Is it, for example, meaningful or attractive to speak of de-commodification as the key to social citizenship considering that many of the contributions of women were not *commodified* in the first place? Is it relevant or fruitful to speak of "welfare-dependency" in the context of transfers to people without employment when society at large depends so heavily on productive activities performed—disproportionately by women—outside the wage-contract? Theories of gender and the welfare state have shown how previous studies have tended to conceal the experiences and contributions of many women and have highlighted the ways in which welfare-state programs and regime types affect men and women differently.

One further theme in welfare-state theory that is bound to become more important in the years to come is the growing awareness of our global environmental challenges. Narrowly focusing on individual nation-states is more difficult to justify if economies cannot grow without having an impact on the prospects of other economies to develop in ways consistent with long-term, global sustainability. From the point of view of political ecology, one of the key structural problems in existing welfare states is that their financial, social, and political feasibility often seems to depend on, and reinforce, environmentally destructive forms of economic growth. Thus, some of these contributions, such as the works of André Gorz and Philippe Van Parijs, have examined the possible role of unconditional basic income

payments and working-time reductions as alternative—less growth-driven—means of addressing unemployment and promoting social cohesion.

Simon Birnbaum

See also [Capitalism](#); [Citizenship](#); [Conservatism](#); [Environmentalism](#), [Ecology](#), and [Political Thought](#); [Economics and Political Thought](#); [Equality and Egalitarianism](#); [Feminism](#); [Globalization](#); [Hayek, Friedrich](#); [Justice](#); [Liberalism](#); [Libertarianism](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Nozick, Robert](#); [Planning](#); [Progress](#); [Rawls, John](#); [Rights](#), [Natural and Human](#); [Social Democracy](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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John S. Partington John S. Partington

Wells, Herbert George

Wells, Herbert George

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Wells, Herbert George

H. G. Wells was born into a lower middle-class family in Bromley, Kent, on September 21, 1866. After a number of abortive starts in life (draper's apprentice, pupil-teacher, and chemist's assistant), he won a scholarship to the Normal School of Science (now Imperial College), London, to study the natural sciences (1884–87). Although he failed to earn a degree at the Normal School, he subsequently did so by correspondence (1890) and became a school teacher for a time (1887–94) before ill health directed his efforts toward journalism and creative writing, and from 1895, he became a successful author. With the publication of such early scientific romances as *The Time Machine* (1895), *The Invisible Man* (1897), and *The War of the Worlds* (1898), Wells established himself as a man of letters, and his resultant wealth permitted him, from 1900, to turn his attention toward sociological and political concerns.

Although Wells had been active in the Normal School debating society, presenting two papers on “democratic socialism” (in 1884 and 1889), his breakthrough as a serious thinker occurred with the publication of *Anticipations of the Reaction of Mechanical and Scientific Progress upon Human Life and Thought* (1901). In this work and in *Mankind in the Making* (1903) and *A Modern Utopia* (1905), Wells developed his eugenic thought, moving from advocacy of sterilization and poisoning for the “people of the abyss”—the inadaptably poor who are incapable of keeping up with modern social and scientific ways of living—to a greater emphasis on educational salvation and welfare provision for the poor combined with

voluntary eugenics based on the presentation of individuals' medical histories and family pedigrees to prospective mates ahead of any commitment to connubial ties. He also emphasized the need for social reform in areas such as housing and healthcare, and he became a pioneering advocate of the "endowment of motherhood," a form of child support paid to mothers for investment in their children's well-being. Given the establishment of a state protective framework for all citizens, where individuals transgress eugenic laws, such as through the transmission of congenital diseases or the founding of a family before financial viability is established, Wells suggests imprisonment and fines, with other antisocial practices such as alcoholism and gambling also being treated through a liberal "island prison" regime.

Wells continued to promote negative eugenics until 1931, with the publication of *The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind*, although when he turned his attention to the question of human rights during World War II, he condemned any involuntary interference with individuals' reproductive choices and so effectively condemned all forms of eugenics in *The Rights of Man, Or What Are We Fighting For?* (1940).

With his membership in the Fabian Society, Wells gave consideration to his socialist philosophy, initially condemning Fabian gradualism, permeation, and small-scale planning in *Faults of the Fabian* (1906) before presenting his own socialist amalgam in *New Worlds for Old* (1908). Acknowledging the tradition of socialist planning bequeathed by the utopian socialists, praising Karl Marx for democratizing socialism, and citing the Fabian promotion of efficient administration as vital to socialism, Wells introduced the importance of a socialist education policy, and advocated the role of "overparent" for the state, making welfare reform and the protection of children central to his socialist philosophy. *New Worlds for Old* became a best seller, and it was revised for publication on two further occasions (1909, 1914).

Although Wells had advocated a kind of global confederation from *Anticipations* onward, it was during the Great War that his world-state thinking came to the fore. In *The War That Will End War* (1914), he called for the establishment of a postwar "Peace League" and in *What Is Coming?*

(1916), he acknowledged the need for the pooling of sovereignty by nations in the postwar settlement, thus, shifting from a confederalist to a federalist philosophy.

In 1917 he became active in the League of Free Nations Association, subsequently joining the League of Nations Union and co-authoring *The Idea of a League of Nations* (1919) and *The Way to a League of Nations* (1919). However, when the League of Nations was established in 1920, Wells condemned it as a talking-shop for foreign office delegates and considered it worse than no league at all.

With his disappointment at the League of Nations, Wells's campaign for a world state intensified until he came to believe that all power that could be removed from nation-states should be so. From 1923, in *Men Like Gods*, he advocated a functionalist form of world government whereby the world would be run by technical agencies responsible for specific functions such as health, education, defense, and transport—a notion later formulated by the political scientist David Mitrany. He further elaborated his functionalist thinking in *The Open Conspiracy* (1928), *What Are We To Do With Our Lives?* (1931), and *The Shape of Things to Come* (1933). Wells felt that a functionalist system of government would prevent the ascendancy of a ruling elite while binding all nations together through the interlocking nature of the technical agencies and the shared interests nations would have in the agencies functioning effectively. With the outbreak of World War II, Wells saw such a functionalist model as prospective through “war-welded federalism,” as he termed it in *The Common Sense of War and Peace* (1940); essentially the extension of American-British-Canadian wartime supply agencies to the postwar world, administering global reconstruction in the first instance, and maintaining such transnational administration into the future.

As a counterbalance to such transnationalism from above, Wells also advocated educational reform from below, seeking both to eliminate nationalist history and to promote a sort of global patriotism. His educational initiatives initially took the form of representing history, biology, and economics in the form of universal textbooks: *The Outline of History* (1920), *The Science of Life* (1930), and *The Work, Wealth and*

Happiness of Mankind. Having produced such presentational models, however, he subsequently turned his attention to the framework of education and modes of widespread knowledge distribution.

From the early 1930s, Wells advocated the creation of a world encyclopedia that would contain all the intellectual raw materials necessary for individuals to make rational judgments and learn about the ways of the world. Such an encyclopedia, most thoroughly presented by Wells in *The Idea of a World Encyclopaedia* (1936), would be an organic project, being supervised by a transnational agency through a network of academic institutions around the world, and being constantly revised based on new evidence and ongoing intellectual debate.

In addition to developing the idea of the world encyclopedia, however, Wells also sought a means of making it easily accessible to all. From the mid-1930s, he began promoting what he called the “world brain,” an early forerunner of the Internet that would allow users to access the most current information through the distribution of texts and objects via microphotography. As he explained in *World Brain* (1938), Wells considered it feasible to produce and distribute primary and secondary source material in very little time through photographing it and supplying it to libraries and even individuals for use on microfiche or microfilm readers. As with the proposed networking of the world encyclopedia, libraries and subscribing individuals could be supplied with new and revised material through a global “brain organization” that would mediate between the researchers on the one hand and the information users on the other. Influenced by contemporary technological developments employed by the British Library, Wells promoted the “world brain” idea through lectures and journalism as well as through such works of fiction as *The Camford Visitation* (1937).

With the outbreak of World War II, Wells came to realize that his socialist thinking, his world government advocacy, and his educational projects were for naught if the rights of citizens could not be protected from national and transnational abuses. In 1939, he therefore launched his “Rights of Man” campaign that he intended as a safeguard for democracy in the highly bureaucratized world that he saw emerging out of the war. Starting with a

series of letters of to *The Times* in 1939, and further popularized in *The Rights of Man*, Wells oversaw a global brainstorm on issues of right, producing draft after draft of his human rights document, and having it translated for world distribution into dozens of languages. In addition to promoting the right to life, work, and police protection for persons and property, Wells also advocated the regulation of global capitalism through the protection of citizens from the restriction of the distribution of necessities, and the buying and selling for profit where no incremental change to the product has occurred. He also condemned the keeping of secret dossiers and the arrest of citizens without charge, as well as the administration of drugs or medical treatment without citizens' prior knowledge and consent. Wells's campaign influenced President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "Four Freedoms" declaration and contributed to the development of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was presented to the United Nations by Eleanor Roosevelt in 1948.

On August 13, 1946, Wells died at his London home. Although few if any of his specific causes saw fruition during his lifetime, he can be credited with reintroducing human rights to the global political agenda, and in terms of promoting transnational politico-economic agencies, he was surely ahead of his time and a contributor to the spirit of the postwar age, especially within the European context. By tying education to political reform, and seeing technology as vital to the expansion of knowledge access, Wells's influence remains strong to this day, and may well prove to be his lasting contribution to world culture in the decades to come.

John S. Partington

See also [Citizenship](#); [Cosmopolitanism](#); [Fabianism](#); [Planning](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Social Democracy](#); [Socialism](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#); [United Nations](#); [Theories of the](#); [Utopianism](#)

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Wollstonecraft, Mary

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Wollstonecraft, Mary

Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–97) is best known as a forerunner of modern feminism. Her extensive body of work participated in contemporary debates in education, social mores, philosophy, and theology. Wollstonecraft's works include educational texts, two novels, book translations, an account of the French Revolution, a travelogue of her journey in Scandinavia, and the political tracts *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790) and *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). In addition, Wollstonecraft was one of the first women to support herself by means of professional reviewing. Her work for the *Analytical Review*, a periodical sympathetic to radical causes, is a key part of her opus. In her reviews of hundreds of texts, we see the development of Wollstonecraft's distinct combination of political argument and cultural criticism, primarily in the form of *literary* criticism.

A Vindication of the Rights of Men

A Vindication of the Rights of Men, Wollstonecraft's first explicitly political work, was written as a response to Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), which was in turn a rebuke of British radicals and reformists. Although it was completed in six weeks, this text represents a mature engagement with Burke's complex politics and rhetoric (in comparison, Burke's text was composed in less than a year and Thomas Paine's well-known *Rights of Man* in approximately two months). Burke's primary target was Richard Price, the prominent Dissenting minister, moral

philosopher, and political writer who had previously supported the American revolutionary cause. Price was known as a Rational Dissenter. Dissenters in general were members of religious groups who refused to swear to Anglican articles of faith that were required of all who wished to attend Cambridge and Oxford, and subsequently to make a living as clergy or to take up civic posts. Rational Dissenters in particular developed a theology that was antimystical and anti-Calvinistic and that encouraged a high level of intellectual and worldly activity. The Rational Dissenters ran a number of educational academies and were deeply engaged in the politics of the day, generally drawing from a rhetoric of classical republicanism in support of their criticisms of corruption in the representational system of Britain and the colonies. Wollstonecraft met Price when she came to Newington Green in London—where the Dissenters had established a school and chapel—to start a girls' school in 1783. There, she was introduced to a community with a rich intellectual and political heritage. Richard Price, Joseph Priestley, and James Burgh were three of the more influential Dissenters and were crucial to Wollstonecraft's intellectual development. They added their voices to the reformist and radical movements in Britain during the years of the American Revolution, the French Revolution, through the 1790s. The reform schemes developed by a diverse array of groups at this time shared some common features: that the franchise be expanded, that taxation for military expenditures be subject to review, and that irregularities in parliamentary representation—such as “rotten boroughs” and unrepresented population centers such as Manchester—be addressed.

Burke's *Reflections*, ostensibly an epistle concerning the danger of the French Revolution, is a substantive reaction to British radicals and reformists. Burke argues for the prerogatives of the state church and the king, the socially stabilizing mechanisms of hereditary titles and property, and the preservation of the (unwritten) constitution. Burke characterizes the constitution of the British state as essentially conservative in the sense that property and legal precedent are the foundations of a stable society. Legal practices, laws of inheritance, and the representational scheme are reformed slowly if at all, for these constitute the accumulated wisdom of ages. Burke makes these arguments with the assistance of a particularly emotive rhetoric, suffused with a staged nostalgia for chivalry, and with gendered

images of the nation and its protectors. A famous passage in *Reflections* depicts Marie Antoinette as an almost angelic figure whose feet barely touched the ground, while the revolutionaries who roused her out of Versailles are “brutish” and might have raped her had they had the chance. Burke laments that in the old days of high chivalry, 10,000 swords might have leapt to her defense. Burke drew on the language of “sensibility” more frequently found in novels, poetry, and dramatic literature than in political treatises.

Wollstonecraft directly confronts Burke’s rhetoric, employing irony to expose his postures of solicitude for the compromised Marie Antoinette, and his breathless admiration for a quickly vanishing European chivalry. As a self-described philosopher—a term that she uses to mean she is an erudite and analytical writer—Wollstonecraft goes further and deeper than her apparent mockery of Burke’s writing. Wollstonecraft recognizes the source of Burke’s highly gendered images in his earlier work, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), an influential treatise on what would later be called aesthetics, which categorizes sense perceptions as male or female. Beneath the ironic and personal tone that was typical of political tracts of the eighteenth century, Wollstonecraft’s *Rights of Men* undermines the rhetoric of *Reflections* by addressing its philosophical underpinnings.

Wollstonecraft does not restrict herself to a cultural critique of Burke’s work. For Wollstonecraft, Burke’s ultimate concern is the preservation of property. Against this, she advocates for “natural rights,” on the one hand, and the principle of civic duty, on the other. The slave trade and the “pressing” of poor and usually propertyless men—something Burke seems prepared to rationalize within his account of the constitution—would not occur if natural rights were prioritized. Moreover, Burke’s exaltation of local interest in family and property is an abdication of duty to society at large. Thus, *Rights of Men* contains both prototypical ideas of modern liberalism as well as elements of classical republicanism. The text ends by returning to the issue of gender, arguing that exaggerated modes of femininity prevent women from pursuing a robust program of self-development.

A Vindication of the Rights of Woman

In her more extensive political work, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Wollstonecraft did not press for an extension of the rights found in the Declaration of the Rights of Man of the French Republic or the Bill of Rights attached to the American Constitution. Instead, she asked that women be educated equally. This would allow them to fulfill their traditional domestic duties more effectively but could also potentially prepare them for a life of worldly activity in commerce, literature, or even as single heads of households. The disruption this implied to the patriarchal structure of most Western societies at this point—whether monarchist or republican—was still in the realm of political fantasy for many of her readers. *Rights of Woman* makes its case by means of an acute cultural analysis. Wollstonecraft describes how gender roles are established through a double standard in education and childrearing in which little girls are debilitated from the start, cut off from the more rigorous physical and intellectual activities that boys took part in, and thus losing a chance at developing their full potential. These practices had been condoned and reinforced by generations of writers in education, philosophy, and theology, among other genres. Wollstonecraft's role as a reviewer for the *Analytical Review* put her in an ideal position to approach her subject in this way. By 1792, she had written more than 300 reviews, and *Rights of Woman* contains many of the elements found in these reviews, including close reading, comparison of passages, and discussions of the intent of the author and social context of a text. This background translates directly into politically charged criticism of texts in *Rights of Woman*, where her primary targets are the works of John Milton, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and John Gregory, a selection that represents different periods, genres, and nationalities. The range of this selection implies that a patriarchal regime that keeps women from attaining their full development persists over time, in different cultures, and across categories of writing.

One of Wollstonecraft's central ideals is a society that allows for the self-determination of the individual, a concept later associated with modern liberalism. Wollstonecraft—nominally an Anglican but greatly influenced by Dissenting religious writing—was practically alone among the reformist and radical thinkers of her time first in extending this ideal to women and

second in grounding her argument on religious principles. The presence of religious principles in *Rights of Woman* has only begun to be investigated. The influence of anti-Calvinist thought, primarily as it was expressed by Rational Dissenters such as Richard Price and the Latitudinarian thinker Joseph Butler, led her to adopt the principle of “earthly probation,” that is, the idea that life on Earth is a period of trial and the fate of the soul is not predestined. Wollstonecraft argued explicitly and directly from this principle to demand that women be allowed the fullest possible liberty in pursuing worldly activities. It is through worldly engagement that women can encounter the challenges that ultimately improve the soul. To block women’s access to the larger world of activity, as Barbara Taylor explains, is tantamount to denying them heaven. Although some cultural historians have long argued that Protestant hermeneutics lie at the roots of modern conceptions of political and economic identity, it is unusual to find a contemporary of Wollstonecraft who makes this explicit, and it is even more unusual to see individual liberty extended to women on this basis.

Wollstonecraft’s Uniqueness

The placement of *Rights of Woman* in its historical and political context has been a controversial topic among historians. One widespread theory states that *Rights of Woman* was not considered genuinely radical when it was first published. A strong reaction to her ideas set in only after the publication of William Godwin’s *Memoirs of the Author of the Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1798), published after Wollstonecraft’s premature death following the delivery of her second child, the future writer of *Frankenstein*. In Godwin’s *Memoirs*, readers discovered that Wollstonecraft had had a child out of wedlock and became pregnant with another before marrying Godwin. They also read of her two suicide attempts after being rejected by the father of her first child. The revelations in *Memoirs* may have provided encouragement to her opponents, but her stature as a political and social thinker rested on the subversive nature of her ideas. This is clear in the many responses to Wollstonecraft in the years following her death, responses that may have been somewhat hysterical and vehement but also intellectually thorough. Wollstonecraft was a writer to be reckoned with. Although it is true that other writers before Wollstonecraft called for better education for women, and even declared the intellectual equality of women,

these schemes were usually gendered; that is, education for women was to be distinct from that of men because it was considered a preparation for a domestic life. Conversely, Wollstonecraft's definition of woman as a social and political being is more progressive than that of many of her predecessors: In *Rights of Woman*, she writes that women's "first duty is to themselves as rational creatures, and the next, in point of importance, as citizens, is that, which includes so many, of mother." This was an inversion of priorities that only a few of Wollstonecraft's contemporaries, and indeed generations of readers afterward, could accept.

Wollstonecraft's politics have also been identified with one strand of classical republican discourse, but she adapted this line of thinking to a pro-woman agenda that had not appeared in the works of her predecessors. For Wollstonecraft, women should cultivate physical robustness, stoic courage under hardship, and most significant, a sense of civic duty. In the writings of Burgh and Price, an individual develops a sense of civic duty from education in politics and history, and from the fact of being the head of a household, where mutual duties and obligations within the family are a basic training in those duties and obligations incumbent on every citizen. Here is the point, however, where Wollstonecraft breaks new ground. In many social models grounded in republican thought, women's role in the polity consisted in remaining within the family as the primary educator of future (male) citizens and providing stout support to their husband. This is the ideal of "republican motherhood" that formed an important part of the culture of the early American republic for instance. Although Wollstonecraft agrees that domestic relationships are the proper matrix for civic identity, and that motherhood is a desirable and natural role for women, she insisted that public and domestic roles for women were not mutually exclusive. Even though many women of her time found the means to overcome the barrier between domestic and public spheres of activity, Wollstonecraft argued for the utter reformation of social models that envisioned women's primary sphere of activity outside of the public. Throughout her work, Wollstonecraft is concerned with women's potential public functions. This, as well as her analysis of gender, and how it profoundly influences the establishment and stability of sociopolitical systems, places Wollstonecraft among the key founders of modern political thought.

Fiore Sireci

See also [Autonomy](#); [Citizenship](#); [Civil Society](#); [Equality and Egalitarianism](#); [Feminism](#); [French Revolution](#); [Political Thought of the Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Republicanism](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#)

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Y

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Young Hegelians

Young Hegelians

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Young Hegelians

The Young or Left Hegelians were a loose association of students and followers of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831), who were active especially in the 1830s and 1840s. Often embroiled in intense controversy with conservative adversaries, and among themselves, their disagreements acquired systematic expression in debates about religion. In 1837, responding to accusations that Hegel's system was pantheistic, David Friedrich Strauss (1808–74) distinguished “Right,” “Center,” and “Left” Hegelianism: While Center Hegelians like Karl Rosenkranz (1805–79) sought compromise, Right Hegelians such as K. F. Göschel (1784–1861) defended Hegel's orthodoxy, and Left Hegelians like Strauss re-interpreted Christian doctrines. Politically (although these lines are porous), the Hegelian Right stressed accommodation with existing authorities; the Left demanded extensive reforms. With their shifting alliances, mutual polemics, and regional differentiations, the Young Hegelians never presented a united front. Typically, southern Germans like Strauss assumed liberal-constitutionalist positions, while those in the Prussian territories became increasingly radical in response to the militantly conservative, anti-Hegelian offensive of the so-called “Christian state” of Friedrich Wilhelm IV (ruled 1840–61).

Strauss's *Life of Jesus, Critically Examined* (1835–36) depicted the Christian doctrine of the incarnation as a mythical expression of the *unity* of the human and the divine. Strauss interpreted this doctrine in Hegelian

terms as the realization of reason in the world, not through Christ as unique mediator, but as a collective task of the human species.

Bruno Bauer (1809–82) rejected Strauss's idea of a collective mythic consciousness. He interpreted Christianity to symbolize not the generic *perfection* of the human race, but individual *freedom*, the ability of each person to transcend immediate interests and promote a general good. Defined as “universal self-consciousness,” this was a positive freedom in which particular interests were voluntarily sacrificed if incompatible with universal emancipation. Such rational autonomy was a uniquely modern possibility, opened by the collapse of traditional social hierarchies. The alternative was the stagnation and conformism of mass society. Bauer increasingly identified religion with alienation, inimical to personal and political freedom. Debating Jewish emancipation, he argued that the solution was the mutual renunciation of religion. After the defeat of the 1848 Revolutions, Bauer wrote anti-Semitic works. In the 1840s, however, he defended republican popular sovereignty.

In *The Essence of Christianity* (1841), Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–72) described the divine attributes as an alienating projection of collective human powers; religious orthodoxy fetishized these powers, constructing a transcendent, divine person, and diminishing possibilities for earthly happiness. Religious alienation contributed to the egoism and dualism of modern society, the split between mind and body, self and other, and self and nature. Rejecting Hegel's idealism as symptomatic of this split, he developed a sensualistic naturalism and an ethic of love and ecological restraint. He influenced Karl Marx (1818–83), Friedrich Engels (1820–95), Moses Hess (1812–75), and the composer Richard Wagner (1813–83).

Many Young Hegelians stressed the economic dimensions of alienation. Eduard Gans (1797–1839), a progenitor of the Hegelian Left, synthesized Hegel with French social thought, describing poverty and concentrated wealth as limiting the progress of freedom. He advocated workers' associations to counterbalance the bargaining power of capital owners, while rejecting socialist ideas of collective property. He stressed the importance of an institutionalized political opposition to maintain freedom.

Viewing alienation as the reduction of workers to instruments of others' wills for purposes of private accumulation, Karl Marx argued for the transformation of capitalist economic relations, rather than for exclusively political reform. Friedrich Engels's markedly Feuerbachian 1845 text, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, attributed the emergence of urban poverty to capitalist industrialization and heralded the overcoming of alienation through recognition of species-consciousness or common interests.

After lengthy imprisonment for republican political activities, Arnold Ruge (1802–80) edited numerous publications and promoted collaboration among the Young Hegelians. Ruge defended the Enlightenment heritage of the Prussian state against advancing conservatism, and after 1840, he censured the regime for succumbing to irrationalist Romantic and pietistic influences. He advocated popular sovereignty, criticizing Hegel's theory of the state for its irresolute republicanism. He promoted Franco-German cooperation as the key to political progress. A republican-democratic delegate to the Frankfurt National Assembly in 1848, he remained committed to progressive politics in exile.

In *The Ego and His Own* (1845), Max Stirner (1806–56) rejected republicanism, democracy, and socialism in favor of anarchism. Rather than castigating egoism, his concept of "ownness" or uniqueness extolled it. All universals or ideals were mere fetishes; particular interest alone defined freedom. Stirner viewed the state not as a Hegelian ethical community but as an obstacle to self-affirmation, and he advocated evasion of all political restrictions and the overcoming of conventional morality. Echoes of Stirner recur in Friedrich Nietzsche.

The Young Hegelians diagnosed problems of freedom and alienation in modern life, the politicization of religion, and social and economic exclusion. Although frequently dismissed as mere transitional figures between Hegel and Marx, their distinctiveness is recognized in recent research. Their influence extends from theology to philosophy to economics and political theory.

Douglas Moggach

See also [Alienation](#); [Capitalism](#); [Engels, Friedrich](#); [Feuerbach, Ludwig](#); [German Political Thought](#); [Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich](#); [Hegelianism](#); [Marx, Karl](#); [Modernization](#); [Nietzsche, Friedrich](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Political Philosophy and Political Thought](#); [Religion and Western Political Thought](#); [Republicanism](#); [Stirner, Max](#)

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Z

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Zionism

Zionism

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Zionism

Zionism is an ideology that seeks to apply the universal principal of self-determination to the Jewish people. It was born in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century based on the realization that Jews would not be able to become free and equal citizens within the emerging European political order, nor would they be physically safe there. Jews would be able to become free, early Zionists reasoned, only if they formed a national liberation movement of their own and strived for their own nation-state. The political logic at the heart of Zionism thus led from the desire for liberty and equality to the ideal of a democratic nation-state for the Jews and, finally, pointed to the land of Israel. In this Zionism differed from the age-old yearnings of Jews to return to the ancient homeland—Israel was Zionism’s conclusion, not its point of origin—but it did follow closely in the footsteps of, and was a reaction to, the general trends of European politics and political thought.

Historical Background

Before the emergence of Zionism, many Jews staked their hopes on the Enlightenment’s ideals and believed that the general march of human progress toward liberty and equality would solve the predicament of dispersed Jewish minorities. Universal civil rights, detached from questions of identity—states indifferent to race, religion, and culture—would dissolve old religious prejudice against Jews. Jewish citizens would be able to

preserve their unique identity in the private sphere, while in the public sphere they would just be citizens like all others. “Be a human being outside and a Jew in your own home,” wrote the Jewish Enlightenment poet and thinker Yehuda Leib Gordon.

But the formula failed: first, because it was designed to accommodate religious identities, while many Jews were becoming secular and were searching for nonreligious—cultural or even national—terms to redefine Jewish peoplehood. Second, it turned out that the political underpinnings of modern liberty were for the most part not at all detached from identity. The question of liberty and equality for Jewish minorities became an intersection where the relations between identity and liberty were tested, producing some of the most progressive, as well as some of the most reactionary, consequences.

Modern conceptions of liberty were increasingly grounded in the realization that individual freedom is dependent on a political order in which citizens share in political sovereignty and retain control over their common fate. Liberty, in this view, would only be secure in democratic forms of government. But when democracies emerged, it turned out they were highly dependent on bonds of national identity. It was the national sentiment that produced the patriotism that, alone, could secure a public spirit. Without it there was nothing that could guarantee that citizens would use the vote with the common good, not just the private interest, in view. The modern democratic state in Europe was not an alternative to the order of nation-states; it was part and parcel of it.

Progressive Jews in the nineteenth century therefore had to revise their hopes to accommodate this emerging national order. It would not do to be a Jew in the private sphere and only a general human being outside it. If Jews were to become truly equal citizens, then outside their private homes they would need to be German, French, English, Russian, and so forth. Thus, Jews would be Jewish at home and members—indeed patriots—of the nations in which they resided outside it.

These fond hopes were soon crushed. Jews were often not seen, and many of them did not see themselves, as fully German, French, English, Russian, and so forth. Unless their identity was defined in strictly religious terms—

which for many was no longer the case—then it would not be easy to reconcile it with that of the nations of Europe.

Herzl and the Birth of Zionism

Theodor Herzl, the founder of political Zionism, clearly grasped this problem. He also saw why liberal and democratic tendencies in Europe, tied as they were to the nation-state, would increase rather than decrease the Jewish predicament: He witnessed how democracy bred a new and virulent form of anti-Semitism in Vienna where the first democratic municipal elections brought a populist anti-Semitic mayor to power; he saw how easily French republicanism gave rise to anti-Semitism at national crises and how French popular sentiments blamed the Jews as alien subversive elements. This was because Jews were conceived, indeed often conceived themselves, as having a collective identity that nation-states failed to accommodate.

Herzl's conclusions were complex, and his thought did not stop at the obvious conclusion that nationalism can turn into virulent xenophobia, from which Jews, especially, will suffer. He also came to believe that the problem had no solution within the existing order because, in his view, Jews were themselves a nation, and nations cannot reside within nations.

Conceiving Jewish identity in national terms, which Herzl began to argue for in his 1895 treatise *The Jewish State*, was neither trivial nor uncontroversial. Many Jews still saw their identity in religious terms, and some were seeking some intermediate cultural identity, neither religious nor national. But the force of Herzl's argument lay in its clarity and consistency: The Jewish Question had no answer within the existing nations of Europe because, Herzl thought, Jewish identity was of the same kind as that of the other nations. Any other answer to "the Jewish question" only led to paradox.

To the extent that national identities rest on historical narratives (to use our own contemporary terms), fully accepting a German, English, or Russian historical narrative would mean forsaking the historical narrative that defined Jewish identity in terms that were clearly collective. One finds it

hard to tell (and others find it hard to accept) two simultaneous different stories of one's origin. What Europe called the Emancipation of Jews did not fail because of anti-Semitism only. It failed, so Herzl believed, because in practice it forced Jews into a dilemma that they could not solve: Full assimilation (and the rights and liberties that come with it) would mean forsaking Jewish identity. Thus, it seemed Jews would be forced to choose between equal rights and Jewish identity; they would not be able to be free and equal as Jews.

If nation-states posed a new problem for Jews, Herzl came to believe, they also pointed in the direction of its solution. If Jews are a nation, then what suits other nations should suit them too. Like many other nations, the road to Jewish liberty lay in a national liberation movement. The logic was thus solidified: If liberty depended on a democratic form of government, and democracy depended on a national identity, then a Jewish democratic state seemed to Zionists to be the logical solution. There, just as gentiles were free to be gentiles, so would Jews be Jewish both in private and in public; only in such a state would they be able to be free as Jews.

But then came practical problems, which were by no means slight. The first of these would be finding a territory. Many different ideas for such a territory, practically all around the globe, rose and fell. Eventually it became clear that Israel was the only feasible location because if Zionism sought to make Jews free without giving up their Jewish identity, that is, without giving up their historical narrative, Israel was so central to that narrative that giving up all ties with it amounted to abandoning Jewish identity. Jews can live in many places, but a Jewish state can only come about in the old homeland. Thus, the political logic of self-determination led Zionism to converge with the old religious dream of returning to the holy land.

The founding of Zionism as a political movement followed closely on the heels of its political logic. It began with democracy. Indeed Herzl called the first Zionist congress, convened in Basel, Switzerland, a "national assembly," a term clearly intended to resonate with the French Revolution. This first congress installed a mechanism for democratic transference of power by instituting a membership fee that entitled members to vote. The

Zionist Organization became a kind of stateless democracy, which would then need to find a way to form a territorial nation state.

The Founding of the State of Israel

Faced with an unprecedented task, its subsequent political history was turbulent. But in 1947, Zionism received wide international recognition for the right of Jews to self-determination in the form of the United Nations partition resolution, which divided Palestine into two nation-states, one Arab and one Jewish. The Zionist leadership accepted the resolution, but its Arab counterpart did not. Thus, the founding of a Jewish nationstate in 1948 was achieved amid a brutal conflict with the local Arab population and the armies of the neighboring Arab states who waged a war to annihilate it at its birth.

Israel's declaration of independence bore the marks of its political origins. It inscribed the foundations of Zionism in the universal right of self-determination as the moral grounding of the state: "[It] is the natural right of the Jewish People," the declaration states, "to be like all nations, masters of their own fate in their own sovereign state."

The declaration also promised universal civil rights to all its citizens, regardless of race, religion, and gender, thus, detaching individual civil rights from questions of identity. Based on the Jewish experience in Europe, it also sought to avert the predicament of minorities in Europe's nation-states and added to individual civil rights collective rights for minorities that enable them to preserve their identity in the public as well as the private sphere, thus, elucidating a constitutional way for a nationstate to accommodate national, not only religious, minorities (eventually Europe followed suit in the European Union's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities).

Recent Developments

Israel has not always remained faithful to these principles in its actual policies, most poignantly in the territories it has occupied since the 1967

Six Days War (most of which were never annexed and still retain the temporary legal status of Belligerent Occupation, outside Israel's international borders). A competing ideology, which, unlike the original creed, sought to define Israel's national identity along blood-and-soil lines, grew along with the attempt of the hawkish political Right to sustain the occupation. It was spearheaded by a religious messianic settler movement that struggled to replace the original Zionist creed. Although this movement and its many supporters managed to partially populate the occupied territories with Jewish settlers, it was never able to alter the constitutional structure of the state, which remains faithful to the original principles of Zionism. These principles are also what led the majority of Israelis—since the Oslo Accord of 1993—to support a two-state solution to the Israeli Palestinian conflict, a solution that, if implemented, would finally fully realize the 1947 United Nations partition resolution, and would further the same ideal that is the moral foundation of Zionism: the universal right of all nations to self-determination.

Gadi Taub

See also [Democratic Theory](#); [Empire and Political Thought](#); [Ethnicity and Political Thought](#); [German Political Thought](#); [Ideology](#); [Liberty, Theories of](#); [National Socialism](#); [Nationalism](#); [Nineteenth-Century Political Thought](#); [Race and Racism](#); [Rights, Natural and Human](#); [Russian Political Thought](#); [State, Theories of the](#); [Toleration](#); [Totalitarianism](#); [Twentieth-Century Political Thought](#)

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